

HD

7303  
T4B8

UC-NRLF



5B 39 738



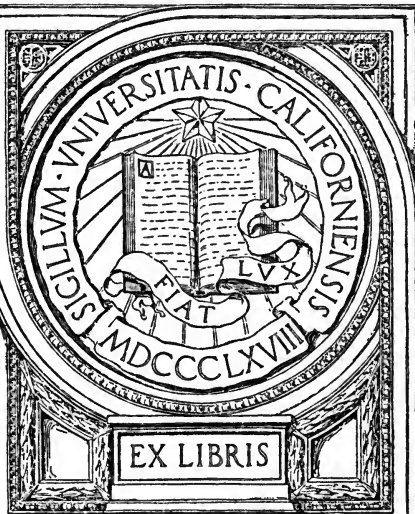
# *The* **HOUSING PROBLEM IN TEXAS**

**A STUDY OF PHYSICAL  
CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH  
THE OTHER HALF LIVES**

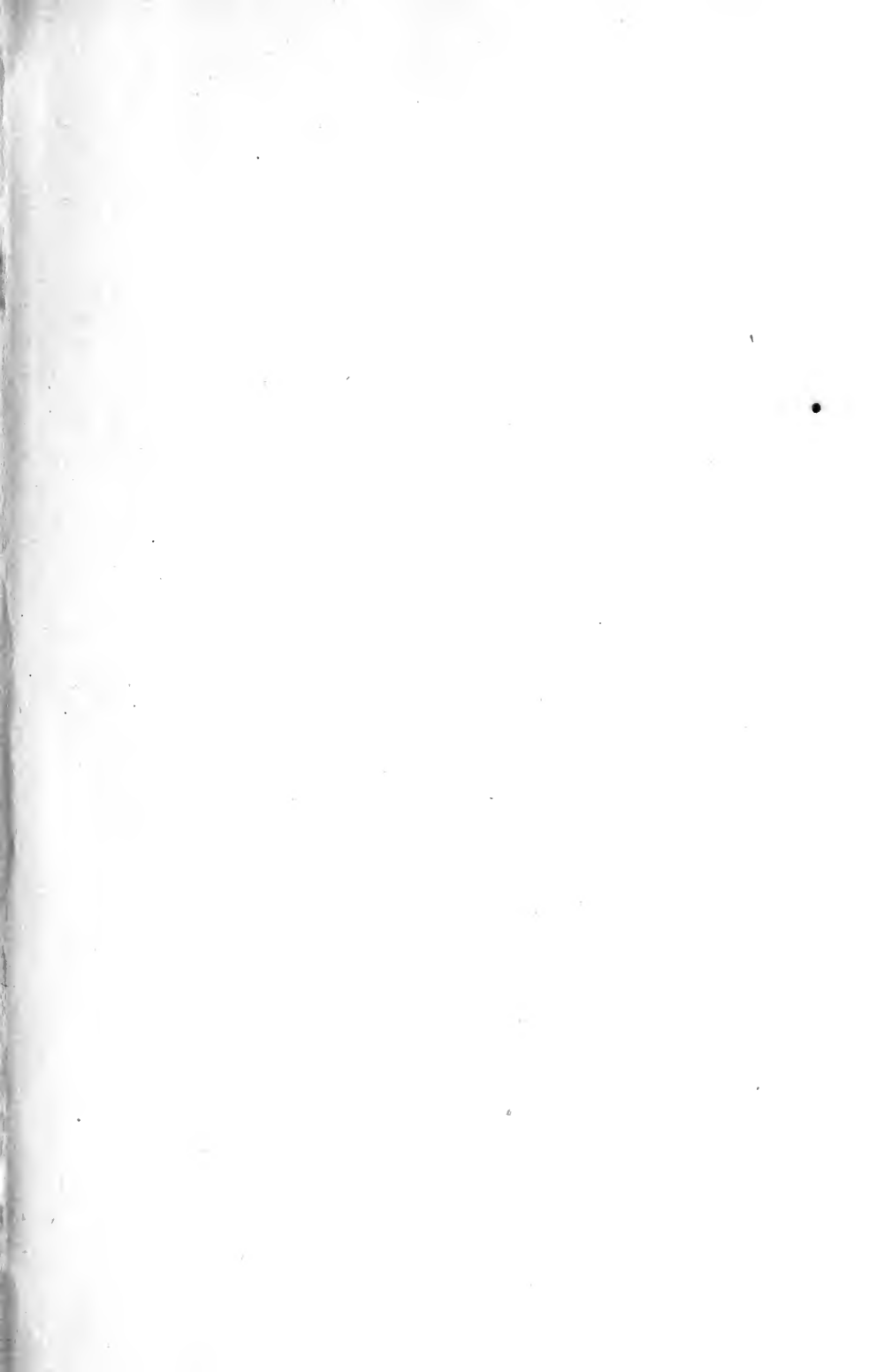
♣ REPRINTED FROM THE ♣  
**GALVESTON-DALLAS NEWS**  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1911

YC 26280

GIFT OF



EX LIBRIS



HD7303  
T4B8



L. C.

(From Issue of Nov. 19.)

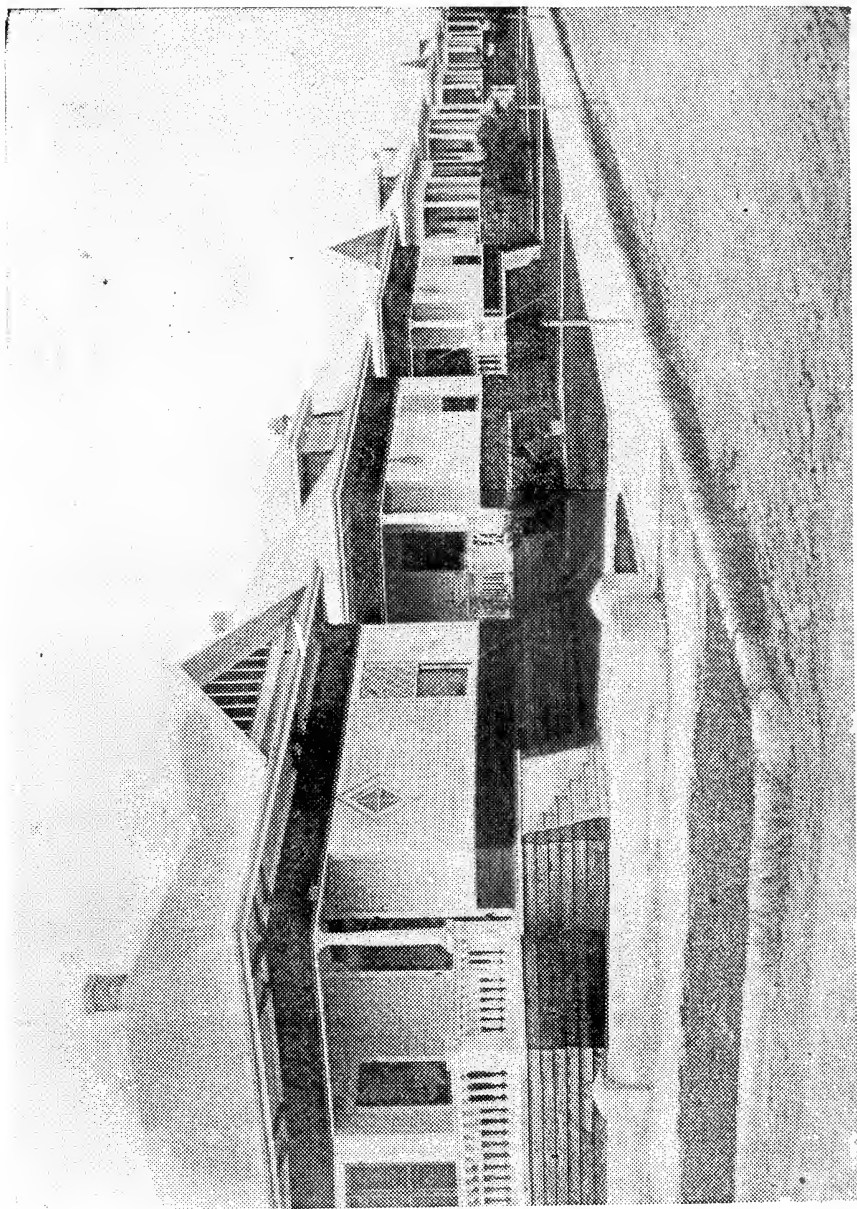
"I insist that you give the workingman a square deal!"

The workingman does not desire pity. His American independence revolts at paternalism. What he wants is co-operation. All he asks is a chance to win his way by his own thrift and industry—a chance which, when given him, becomes the embodiment of the square deal, the practical and most commendable expression of that sympathy which is latent in the American heart.

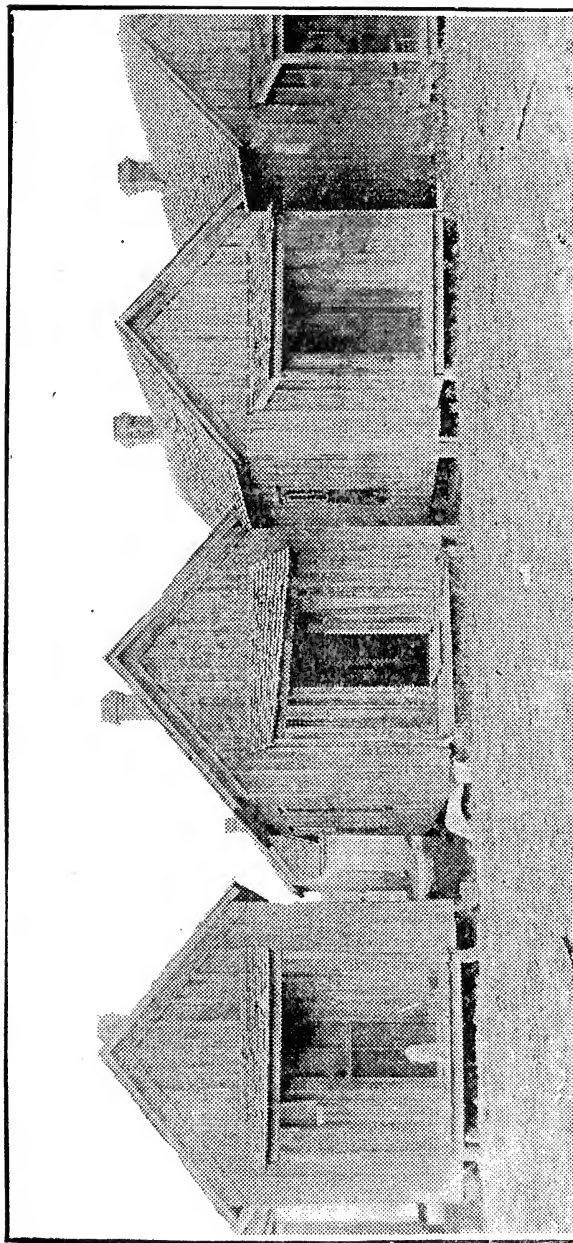
These National characteristics are exemplified in the people of Texas. The State has enjoyed abundant prosperity. Its population has increased rapidly under the lure of its fertile fields to the homeseeker from colder and less pleasing climes. Throughout its vast and fertile farming areas the jocund God of Plenty has filled its cup of fruitfulness. The boundless ranges of the West have made way for little farms where happy, industrious families abide, content in the joy of wholesome work and righteous living.

Factories have come to its cities. Railroads have contributed to its commercial importance in the marts of the world. Big business and little business have assisted its prosperity and made of it a land of commercial and industrial richness and productivity.

NO. 1780  
AUGUST 1910



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

**PUBLIC HAS NOT SEEN OPPORTUNITY.**

Its people are high-minded and loyal to principle. Their hospitality is proverbial, even in the South, where hospitality has long been the watchword of the home. Their benevolence is far-reaching and without stint. Charity is the symbol of their religion and the creed of their lives is the doctrine of the square deal. Where opportunity offers, that policy is applied, ever willingly, ever readily and without restriction or discrimination. But it has been in perceiving the opportunity that Texans have become near-sighted. They see the opportunity of applying the square deal immediately around them. To their neighbors its practice is never withheld. But not knowing in the first instance, it has, perhaps, never been suggested to them to find opportunity for the square deal in the alleys, in the factory sections of the town, in the homes where unskilled working people live—in short, in those neglected quarters where respectability and an unfair deal are in constant, embittered and unrelenting conflict. Brought into conflict not primarily by the habits of the people, but by conditions of living which a neglectful public has imposed upon them, these forces are at work incessantly and society must pay the penalty, whatever it may be.

There is no intention on the part of Texans to neglect the workingman. They are merely not acquainted with his condition. They know nothing of the chief and intimate obstacles of his life over which he can not climb without the co-operation of the rest of the community. They are willing to assist him to adjust his labor differences when their gravity impresses them sufficiently to distract them from their occupations. If his family is in want, their purses are generously open to his needs. But beyond that they have not gone, largely because they have not known, and in pursuing their philanthropies they have almost invariably overlooked the fundamental element in his life—the house he lives in.

Widespread attention to his home becomes now the surest means of applying to the laboring man the principle of the square deal. Give him relief from the crowded house, equip him with facilities of housing necessary to the proper rearing of his children for clean and healthy living and to the promotion of that abiding happiness which it is his right to enjoy; in short, make of his living place a home in every sense of that endearing word, and the first long step shall have been taken toward administering to him the help he wistfully desires, the right he justly demands—a square deal.

This is the phase of the housing question that concerns the workingman himself. The problem is thus perceived through the perspective of philanthropy. Yet, aside from the altruistic motive that prompts assistance to him, there is in the movement for better housing the practical idea of self-advancement—a vital consideration of society as a whole, which has too long been regarded as a work of destiny, insusceptible of human influence and not demanding it. However, leading minds, recognizing the virtue of Mr. Roosevelt's truism, "We all go up or down together," have perceived the need of accelerating the normal development of society by eliminating its artificial retardants and controlling those natural backward tendencies which assert themselves when conditions of life are permitted to fall below the normal.

**NATION'S SEED SOWN IN HOME.**

Seeking to discover the principal source of agencies that exert both baneful and benevolent influences upon society's growth, investigation of sociologists has led them to the home. Their two-fold purpose has been to arrest the evil and to promote the good, relying for beneficial results upon the well-grounded trust that racial progress may be hastened in proportion to the employment of wisdom and experience in directing aright the channels of social tendencies. They have found that at the hearthstone the seeds of the Nation are sown. There, nurtured by wholesome influences, through normal evolution they germinate and bloom into the fruit of substantial progress; or, embedded in toxic cultures that have been caused by ignorance and neglect, they degenerate into prolific sources of vice, crime and social retrogression.

Upon a moment's reflection it will be accepted that the home and its influence are responsible for the character of the Nation—its mental, moral and physical vigor or decrepitude. The proverb, "As the twig is bent so is the tree inclined," has become the law of the moral as well as the natural world, and the

deeper investigators delve into the effects of the inevitable application of this rule the more responsible and important becomes in their eyes the labor of bending the twig aright.

Briefly, therefore, the primary consideration of self-interest in current housing reforms is the betterment of conditions that surround the citizens of tomorrow—the children of today. The underlying purpose is to rear a Nation of sturdy, self-respecting and self-reliant men and to reduce to the minimum those conditions of early life that frequently force their victims into pathways of abject poverty and degradation. The champion of good housing for the unskilled workingman is laboring not so much for the present as for the future.

Housing reform recognizes another principle in the solution of its problems. Organized charity frequently teaches that it is to the worthy alone that its efforts should be directed. It justifies this contention upon the ground that charity dispensed among unworthy recipients becomes merely an invitation to shiftlessness and sloth. Yet experience has taught that the menace to society is not from its worthy poor. It is the unworthy, the very flotsam and jetsam of the social tide, which comprises the social incubus. The accepted theory of housing reform, therefore, does not discriminate between the good and the bad. It deals with both as inseparable components of a section of the community whose condition of living must be bettered for the general welfare; because the entire community is affected by the condition of its component parts.

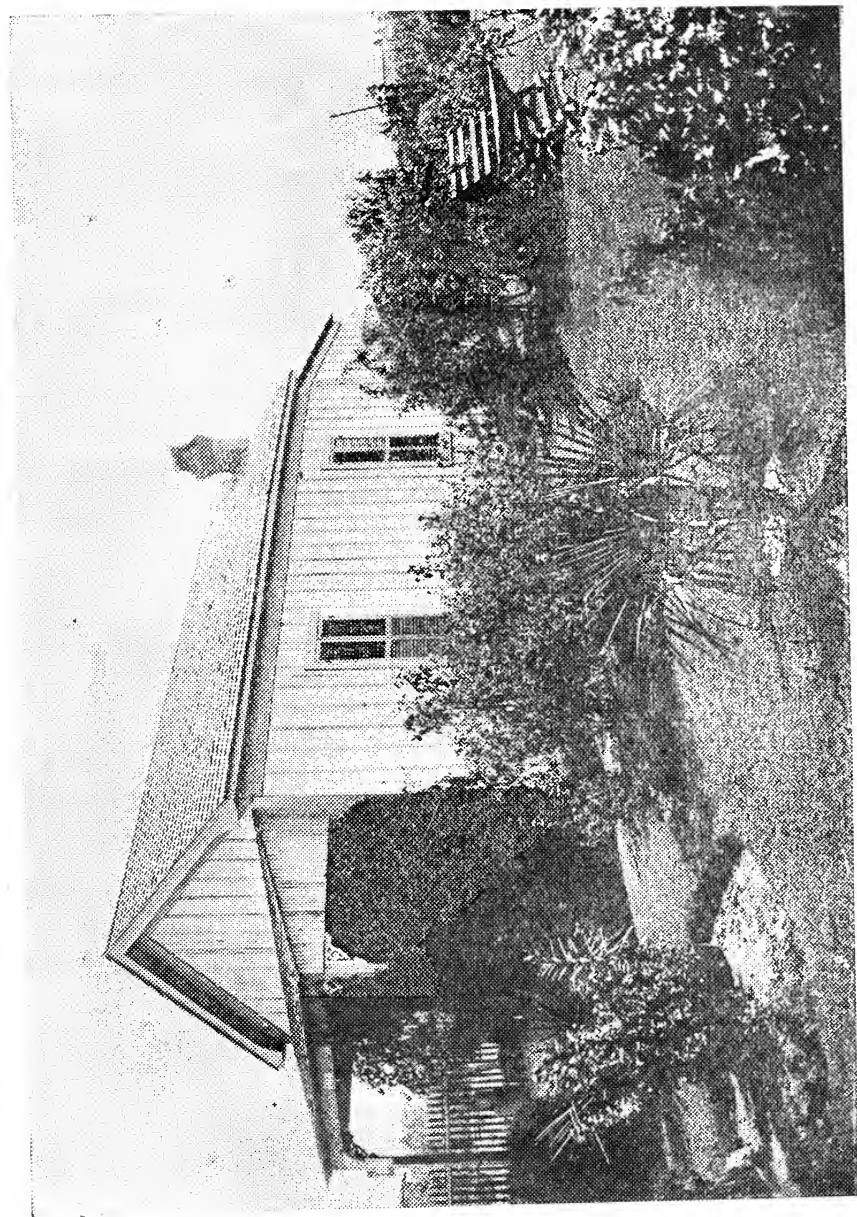
Texas has its housing problem. In respect of many elements it is unique. It will be the effort of this series of articles to show a few pen pictures and illustrations of housing conditions prevailing in this State, that the citizens themselves may know with what problems they will have to deal eventually if not presently. Together with these, remedies will be suggested, culled from the best wisdom and experience of the age, in the hope that they will be of assistance to Texans in solving problems of their own.

## **INATTENTION TO HOUSING CAUSED NEW YORK'S "HORRIBLE EXAMPLE"**

(From Issue of Nov. 20.)

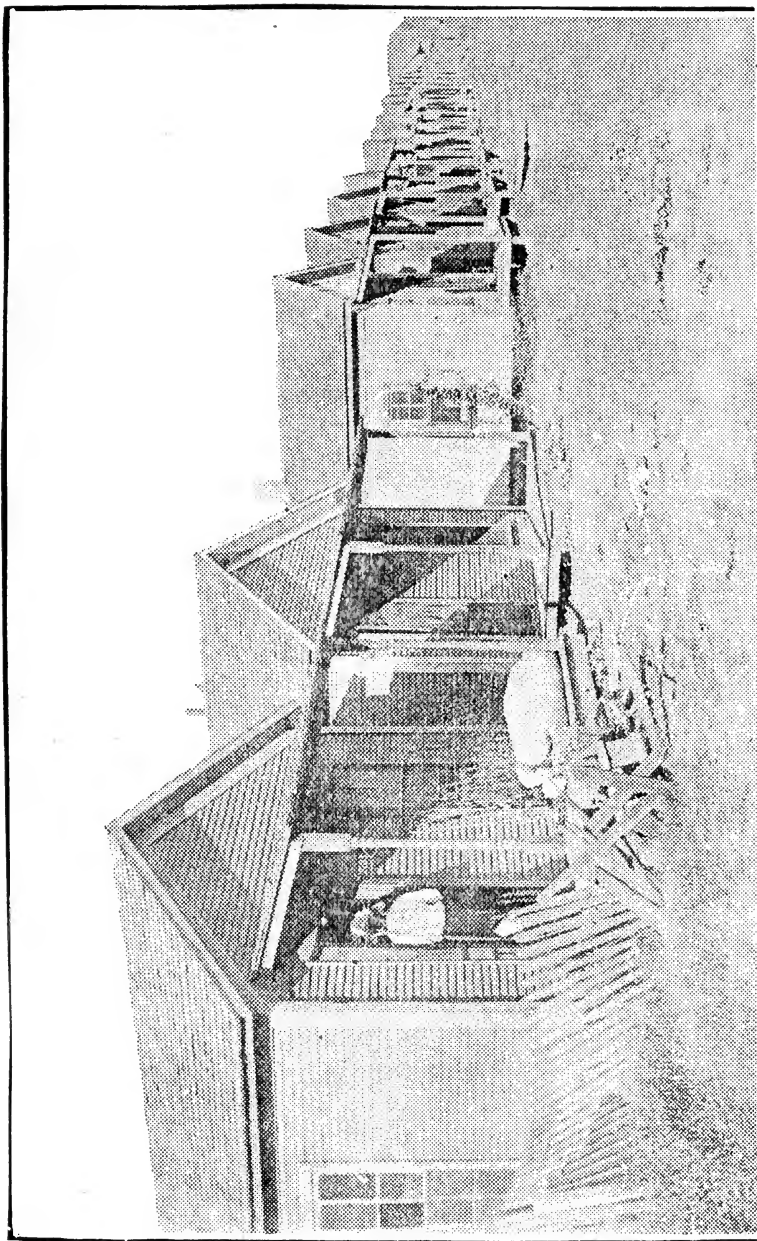
Texans, perhaps, are familiar with social conditions that prevail in the more congested centers of population. The housing problem has been a favored topic of newspaper and magazine writers for a long while. The sympathy of the Nation, when its attention has been suddenly concentrated upon evils as they exist, has been freely extended. Society recognizes these evils, has long regretted their existence, but it has been slow to act; and, in consequence of its sluggishness, New York, Boston, Cincinnati and other cities of the Nation are today facing problems vitally affecting the welfare and destiny of large parts, if not all, of their citizenships, the final and adequate solution of which can not be definitely foreshadowed even by the energy and the money that are being expended toward its attainment. Society begins to realize that it has too long deferred the settlement of social problems which, when formative, were of easy solution, but which, when formed and crystallized into concrete resistance to remedial measures, are of difficult mastery.

Statistics have proven that the most densely populated city in the world is New York. Conditions there are without parallel, no city of the old world nor of the new affording so horrible an example of the evils of inadequate housing as does the American metropolis. New York houses the great mass of its working people in tenements, reaching far into the air and extending for miles throughout the city. Congestion and overcrowding reach the depths of their evil there. Nowhere has there been such disregard of light and air and conditions of health and decency in the dwellings of human beings. More than two-thirds of the inhabitants of the city live in multiple dwellings. There are more than one hundred thousand separate tenement houses. The statement is made by Lawrence Veiller, who has made a life-long study of the subject, that "we have over ten thousand tenement houses of the hopeless and discredited 'dumb-bell' type with narrow 'air shafts' furnishing neither sunlight nor fresh air to the thousands of people living in the rooms opening



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

on them; we have over twenty thousand tenement houses of the older type in which most of the rooms are without light or ventilation; we have over one hundred thousand dark, unventilated rooms without even a window to an adjoining room; we have eighty thousand buildings, housing nearly three million people, so constructed as to be a standing menace to the community in the event of fire, most of them built with wooden stairs, wooden halls and wooden floors, and thousands built entirely of wood. Over a million people have no bathing facilities in their homes; while even a greater number are limited to the use of sanitary conveniences in common with other families, without proper privacy; over a quarter of a million people had in 1900 no other sanitary conveniences than antiquated yard privies; and even today two thousand of these privy sinks still remain, many of them located in densely populated districts, a source of danger to all in the neighborhood, facilitating the spread of contagious disease through the medium of the common house-fly."

### ROOTS OF TROUBLE WERE SMALL.

This is modern New York. To be sure the picture is appalling; and yet no investigation which may be pursued will reveal better and more forcefully the insidious and subtle encroachment of popular congestion than will a brief study of these conditions, together with a reference to the history of their development. A moment's reflection will make it impossible to cast the figures aside with the remark, "Oh, well, that's New York, and we have nothing like that and doubtless never will have."

Before the War of 1812 New York had less than one hundred thousand inhabitants. Its territory was more than sufficient to take care of them and apparently to accommodate all normal increases. It has frequently been said that New York did not apprehend the coming of congested conditions until it awakened one morning to the disconcerting fact that it had no adequate place to house the greater mass of its people. After hostilities had ceased and the United States had re-established its stability as a Nation offering homes and civil liberty to all who might desire them, foreigners crowded the port with the arrival of every ship and located themselves in the city in search of a livelihood.

The situation was allowed to adjust itself after a haphazard fashion. There was no systematic planning of accommodations for the increasing population. The idea of city planning had not been born. New York was short-sighted. It did not penetrate the future and provide early preventive measures to control conditions that subsequently overwhelmed it.

As late as 1835, seventy-six years ago, it was within the power of New York to control its social situation. In that year its population numbered only 270,000. Problems that were rooted in the town of less than 100,000 were given no greater attention by the city of 270,000.

Its tenement house problem was growing but not grown. The old homes of the Knickerbockers, the elite of the early colony, which had been vacated as the encroachment of the business districts drove their affluent occupants farther toward the quietude of rural precincts, were converted into makeshift lodging houses to accommodate as many families and persons as their physical limitations would allow. The plan of the tenement house began to ramify throughout the city. The tide of immigration continued. The situation grew from bad to worse. And soon New York found itself confronted by irremediable conditions that have made the world stand aghast. They developed, too, in less than the period of three score years and ten, the allotted span of human life.

It is not necessary to go further into the housing problem of New York. As far back as this generation of readers can remember New York has been the "horrible example" of social neglect. The instance is cited merely to impress the fact that New York's tenement problem—the worst in the civilized world—was conceived in the error of unpreparedness. Neglect at a time when attention and the employment of judicious wisdom could have prevented or largely restrained the evils that have grown up, is now claiming its compensation in the unrelaxing and discouraging battle through which the city hopes by courageous perseverance and fabulous expenditures of money to attain eventual solution of its greatest problem.



**THE ANALOGY BROUGHT HOME.**

From this should be gleaned the single thought that when the present tenement evils of New York took root, the metropolis was not superior in numbers of people to the Dallas, the San Antonio, the Houston of today.

Ponder for a moment upon what that means.

New York's troubles began, not in the form of metropolitan problems, but in the insidious and deceptive guise of conditions that confront the growing towns of Texas right now.

The same inexorable laws are at work in Texas, whose disregard brought shame to New York. They can be ignored in Texas with no more security against evil consequences than they were in New York.

It is true that at the present there is no city in Texas which has a serious problem WHERE to house its people. Neither did New York have that problem seventy-five years ago.

But almost without exception the leading cities of Texas indisputably have even now the problem HOW to house their people.

This being true, the experience of New York, Boston, Cincinnati and others of their class, which have grown in less than one hundred years from comfortable towns to seething masses of congested humanity, jammed into areas too small to accommodate adequately half the number of their people, should quicken the sensibilities of citizens of Dallas, of Galveston, of Houston, to the unquestionable possibility that one hundred years may bring them face to face with a baffling social predicament.

The wise Health Department guards against smallpox or cholera before its unsuspecting dependents are in the fell clutch of epidemic. Discovery of endemic cases spurs the health guardians to prevent by quarantine and isolation that which they could not, perhaps, control or cure when its magnitude had grown to epidemic state. This is the only successful theory of treating evils which are the outgrowth of bad housing conditions. They must be forestalled; it is too difficult to cure them after they have developed. New York has thrown up its hands with the wail, "The tenements are with us to stay; we must do the best we can and hope."

Under the prevailing system of values even the lives of human beings can not be weighed against stupendous financial destruction. It would bankrupt New York to destroy its tenements. Once rooted, therefore, evil housing conditions resist and defy drastic and persistent efforts to eradicate them. Consequently, the thought should suggest itself that it is by far simpler to build houses properly for the unskilled working people, to establish adequate regulations governing their maintenance, and to correct forming evils before they become unmanageable through their accretions of strength from inattention and neglect, than it would be to deal successfully with the tremendous task which continued neglect may have brought about.

It is, therefore, the wise city that will look about it, determine what its deficiencies are, inaugurate measures to repair them and to provide means for the continued development of its physical parts along logical, constructive, well-defined lines, leaving, if possible, no opportunity for chance to work unexpected harm.

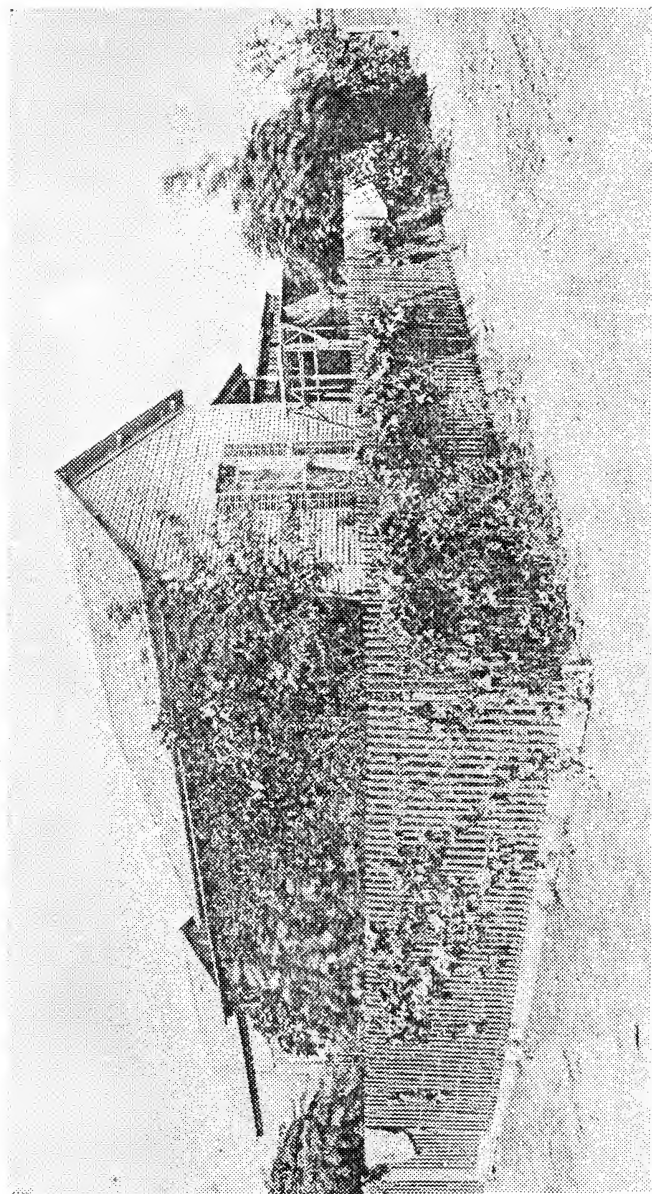
In short, Dallas and Galveston, San Antonio and Houston and all the cities of Texas, now while they may, should profit by New York's "horrible example." In years to come it may be too late.

---

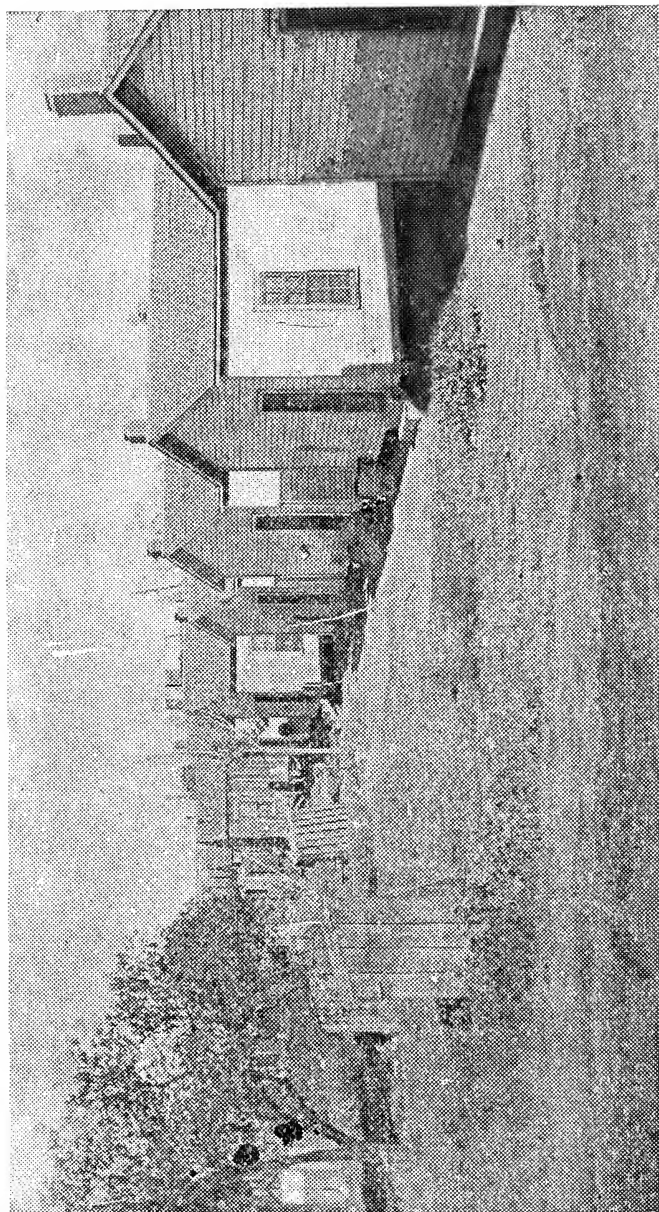
## **TEXAS CITIES HAVE TENEMENTS SHOCKING IN THEIR INADEQUACIES**

(From Issue of Nov. 21.)

There are in Texas no tenement houses meeting the popular idea of such institutions. The public's conception of a tenement house pictures a large, tall building in which hundreds of persons find meager refuge under all sorts of revolting conditions. This reveals merely the magnitude to which tenements attain in the larger cities, especially in New York. It is, in fact, the picture of the tenement which



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

a visitor to New York would, perhaps, carry away engraved upon his memory. Yet such does not supply an exclusive illustration of the tenement system. The New York tenement house law draws no such distinction in its definitions.

Under the statute of New York a tenement house is "any house or building, or portion thereof, which is rented, leased, let or hired out, to be occupied, or is occupied, or is intended, arranged or designed to be occupied as the home or residence of three families or more living independently of each other, and doing their cooking upon the premises, and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yard, cellar, water closets or privies, or some of them, and includes apartment houses and flat houses."

New York, being the original home of the tenement house, surely should know what it is. And under its definition, despite the fact that popular conception is not satisfied, there are tenement houses in Texas—many of them. In them, too, are found conditions just as foul, just as revolting, just as inhumane, just as much of an eyesore and a shame to the community, as the records report to prevail in the notorious tenements of New York.

The foregoing statement is made after mature reflection. Without personal inspection to corroborate it, there is substantial doubt in the mind of the writer that it will be accepted absolutely at its face value. Nevertheless, there is no disposition to exaggerate the recital of conditions as they were found in some of the Texas cities, and the writer is prone to believe that if the public will bear with him until the entire series of articles shall have been completed, the preceding declaration will be measurably supported in detail. No graphic picture, however, can be drawn of conditions that were seen. Nothing but personal observation will convey an adequate idea of their enormity.

Between housing conditions as they are reported to prevail in New York tenements and those surrounding the workingmen of Texas, there are but two distinct differences. In New York the magnitude of evil is greater—far greater. Again in New York one of the conspicuous blemishes of the tenement system is its dark rooms—rooms without even a window opening to an adjoining room. New York has more than 100,000 of them in which people are born, live and die. If there are multiple dwellings in Texas noticeably possessing this architectural atrocity, the writer's investigation failed to elicit information concerning them.

### JUST AS INTENSE IN TEXAS.

But excepting these two elements in New York's housing problem—its magnitude and tenement dark rooms—Texas is pretty well equipped to match in intensity of housing evils anything that has yet been written about New York.

There is the same overcrowding of people—not so great as occurs in New York tenements, but great enough to impair health and to corrupt morals.

There is the same lodger evil, exerting its same disrupting influence upon the home.

There is the same unsanitary house, built without bathroom, running water or sewerage connections.

There is the same unsanitary closet in the yard, affording the same dangerous source for the spread of contagion through the medium of the common housefly.

There is its same multiple use by numerous families.

There is the same crowding of houses upon lots too small for one, and there is the same general unfitness of habitations for the purposes of the home.

The conspicuous difference is that New York is bigger and its problem is bigger and consequently more aggravated. But in the intensity of the evils which make up this problem it has very little that is not common to the growing cities of Texas.

Men and women, who by long study and investigation have become experts in this line of sociological endeavor, are agreed that bad housing consists of any condition of housing impairing the physical, moral or mental health of the tenant; any condition of housing that is unsafe, unsanitary or unfit for living or home-making, or any condition of housing damaging to the community or city. Conditions meeting each of the distinct parts of this definition are found in Texas, and found in shameful abundance.

The immediate victims of bad housing conditions in Texas—as they are every-

where else—are the laboring people. This does not mean the destitute. The paupers are much worse off. They live where they can find a place to sleep, in sheds, in huts or in the alleys of the cities. Yet the houses of the workingmen—the heads of families who earn \$7 a week, \$10 a week, \$15 a week or slightly more—are frequently by some strange misconception regarded by the public as the homes of the very poor.

Investigation will prove that a city's social problem with respect to housing does not so much concern the very poor as it does the industrious laborer and his thrifty family. Industry and thrift can go side by side with that squalor which influences, outside and beyond the tenant's control, impose upon him. Many of the workingmen would like to better conditions surrounding them; others would not, perhaps, because they have been so long used to scant accommodations. But whatever their attitude may be, it does not relieve nor excuse the conditions around them.

### CONDITIONS A PUBLIC MENACE.

The homes of the poorest paid of the working people of the State—those to whom on Labor Day the politicians are wont to ascribe the stability of the Nation—frequently reveal conditions of physical depravity that are beyond adequate description. Somehow, a popular misconception has intruded to engender the idea that only large cities have conditions of intense degradation. Dwellings that have been described as “just old houses where poor people live,” as several writers have expressed it, are upon investigation found to be in their evil conditions actual lazar-houses of moral and physical pestilential agencies. Homes of the wealthy, which, when abandoned by their original occupants and turned over to the poor, not infrequently degenerate into sources of vice and disease because they are put to uses for which they were never intended—those of multiple residences. Even a slum—the quintessential evil of improper housing and living of people—is now technically described as not an area but a condition—a condition that can be just as intense in one house as in a territory covered by a thousand. Congestion may aggravate it, but congestion is not essential to it.

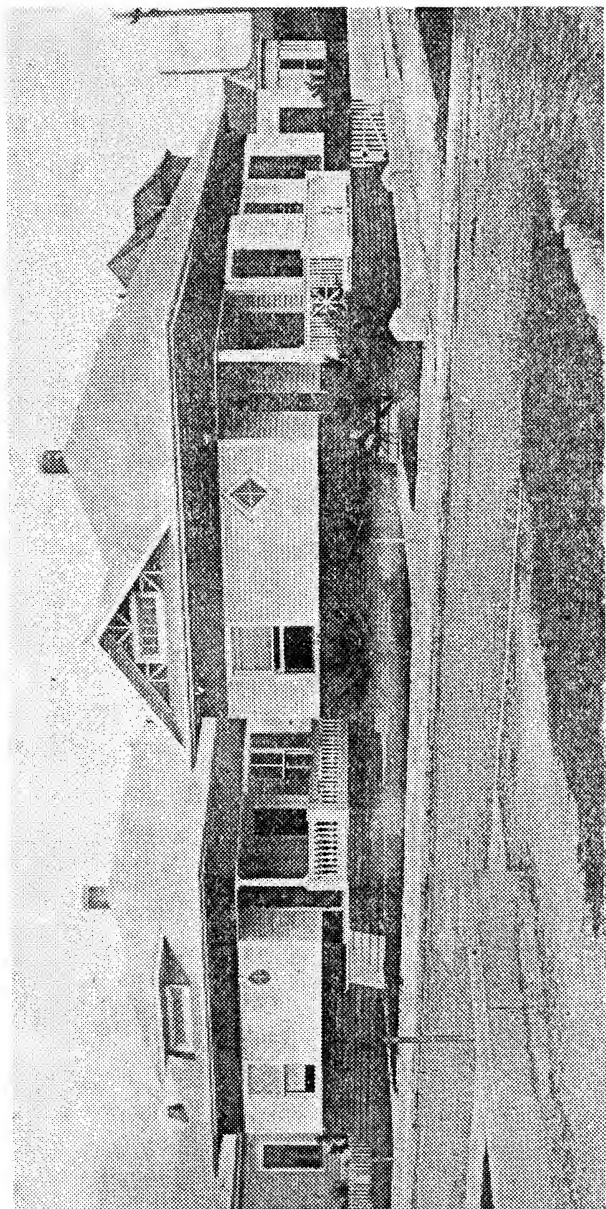
The only reason that Texas cities have no broad areas of congested evils arising from inadequate housing facilities is that they are comparatively small. It can not be denied that a very fair and productive nucleus for a wide expanse of physical degradation is supplied in conditions that necessarily prevail where in a certain city of Texas more than one hundred dwellings are crowded into a not approximately 300 feet long by 70 or eighty feet wide. A menacing situation has an advantageous start in limitations that impose the use of six closets upon the occupants of more than fifty two-room houses. Add to these half a dozen hydrants in the yard as the only water supply of the premises, the absence of drainage, the practice of sleeping four to six and even more in one small room, lack of proper sanitary inspection and the necessary means of protecting public health from the contamination of disease-breeding influences—with all these things, and more, too numerous to mention here, a great public menace, it is repeated, has a pretty good start.

And it has made just such a start in leading Texas cities.

It must be recalled and constantly borne in mind that no city—not even New York, “the horrible example”—suffers a housing problem that is coextensive with its territorial limits. There are broad areas even in the American metropolis that are given over to homes that meet the essential requirements of homes. New York's problem affects only parts of the city, but they happen to be the biggest parts. In Texas, the housing problems of the leading cities affect vitally only their smaller parts, their more restricted areas.

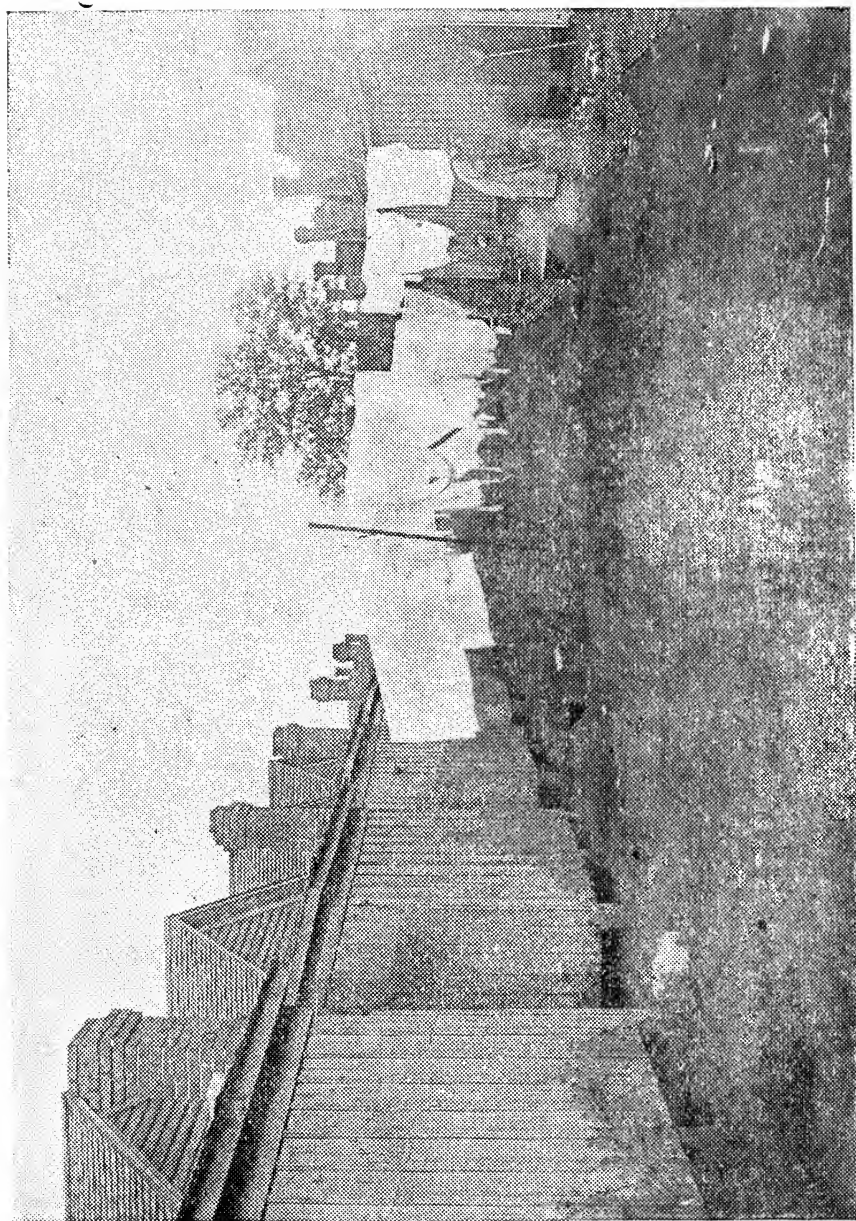
### EVIDENCES OF TEXAS' PROBLEM.

In those parts of Texas cities where such problems occur, they manifest themselves through a number of striking physical evidences, which, as it will later be seen, trace their effect upon the tenants, in a variety of moral phenomena. In the first place, the noticeable defect in Texas' system of housing portions of its working people is the proximity, one to another, of the houses in which it compels them to live. The dominant method of housing the unskilled



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS,"





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

workingmen in all the cities of the State is by use of individual houses in contradistinction to the large multiple house which forms the popular conception of the tenement of New York. This, according to all experts on housing, is the ideal way to take care of the laboring people. But the reasons why this method is considered best are that when properly carried out it provides privacy to the family, a yard for the children, sanitation for the household and health and attractiveness to the community. Now, in the cities of Texas those reasons, for the most part, have been ignored, and the exploitation of the one-house idea has defeated its own end and purpose. The absence of yards, the crowding together of houses and the application of the one-house method to the exchequer of the owner rather than to the benefit of the tenant, have brought about in abundance the same evils which opponents of New York tenements so relentlessly berate.

This might properly be considered the gravest deficiency in Texas' manner of housing its working people. A great many of the more vicious consequences of bad housing are traceable directly to such a cause. The communities have not been liberal in providing lots. The yard space is generally too confined. While housing experts say that never more than 66 per cent of the lot should be occupied by the house, very, very frequently no regard whatever has been given to yard space. There are instances in nearly all the leading cities of Texas of row upon row of tenant houses separated one from another only by a distance ranging from three to five feet. Couple with this the wide practice of building laboring men's houses behind a row that faces the street, and the acme of house-crowding is attained. And this is frequently seen in Texas cities.

In respect of other things essential to a home, besides the provision of ample premises, Texas cities have been equally inconsiderate. Hundreds and hundreds of laboring men's houses have been built without bathrooms or bathtubs. Just as many have been erected without running water indoors. A small per cent only is equipped with sewerage connections and thousands of outdoor, surface closets are in use almost in the very heart of the larger cities.

Municipal authorities have not provided rigid sanitary inspections, and have not extended their sewer systems in proportion to the needs of the several communities. Sanitary laws are not always thoroughly enforced, and in many instances the code, itself, is deficient.

Building is not adequately supervised except in the fire limits of the towns, and little attention, if any at all, has been paid to the kind of house a landlord shall erect and rent to a wage-earner.

In short, the cities of the State have not known of their developing housing problem, and concerning it there has long been a somnolent apathy.

A trip through the sections of Texas cities that are given over chiefly to the residences of laboring classes will recall the words of H. L. Meader, and impress one with their truth, that—

"Happiness is most easily attained by being contented with one's surroundings, but to be content with some people's surroundings would require a degree of complacency that would reflect discredit on a hog."

---

## **SURVEY OF DALLAS REVEALS DEFECTS IN SYSTEM OF HOUSING ITS PEOPLE**

(From Issue of Nov. 22.)

Apart from social workers, who are brought into continual contact with families of the workingmen of small means, there are few people, perhaps, who are intimately acquainted with the housing problem of Dallas. The city has grown very rapidly within the last decade, and has enjoyed a golden era of prosperity, the brilliancy of which has probably blinded the people's eyes to the forming of social problems. That part of the citizenship which has the influence and power to reduce and prevent conditions injurious to the public weal has had no direct means of finding out their existence. In the enjoyment of its own prosperity it has erroneously assumed that everybody else was prospering too. It rarely has occasion to visit the homes of laboring people, and, in the absence



of personal knowledge, is prone to regard as overdrawn the picture of squalor and degradation which social workers describe.

It matters little how intense his interest, how dominant his indignation may be, the picture of housing conditions in Dallas which the experienced social worker portrays, is not overdrawn. It can not be overdrawn for the simple reason that the cogency of words can not surpass the emphasis of facts.

Conditions of housing in cities of Texas were on several occasions discussed by the writer with Dr. Charles Stelzle, the eminent social worker of New York City, who has devoted his lifetime to the study and solution of social problems. Dr. Stelzle was shown conditions prevalent in Dallas. A morning spent in personal investigation here convinced him that New York City, the "horrible example" of evil conditions of housing, "has nothing like this." And in his final word to Dallas men assembled in the Opera House at the close of the Men and Religion campaign, he described a housing situation which he personally inspected, and characterized it as viler than any he had ever seen in any city of America. Let us, therefore, at the outset obtain if possible a panoramic view of sections of Dallas where laboring people dwell, with the purpose of evolving details later.

As elsewhere in Texas, the mode of housing working people in Dallas is by use of the detached house in contradistinction to the multiple tenements built for the accommodation of several families for whom separate apartments are provided. It has been impracticable to ascertain definitely the number of houses in the city that are occupied by working people of small means, but from statistics compiled in the office of P. K. Baker, commercial superintendent of the Southwestern Telephone Company, a dependable estimate of the number can be made. There are in Dallas—or were at the time Mr. Baker's census was taken—19,412 families, of which 7,635 live in houses that rent for \$15 a month and less. There are 3,451 families living in houses in Dallas that rent for less than \$10 a month. But owing to a small number of vacant houses, and more especially to the practice of working people of small means of living in one house as separate families, in order to make financial ends meet, the foregoing figures can not be said to represent accurately the number of such houses in the city. They supply a reliable approximation, however, and it may therefore be said that there are about 7,000 houses in the city that are, or are intended for, the homes of working people of modest means.

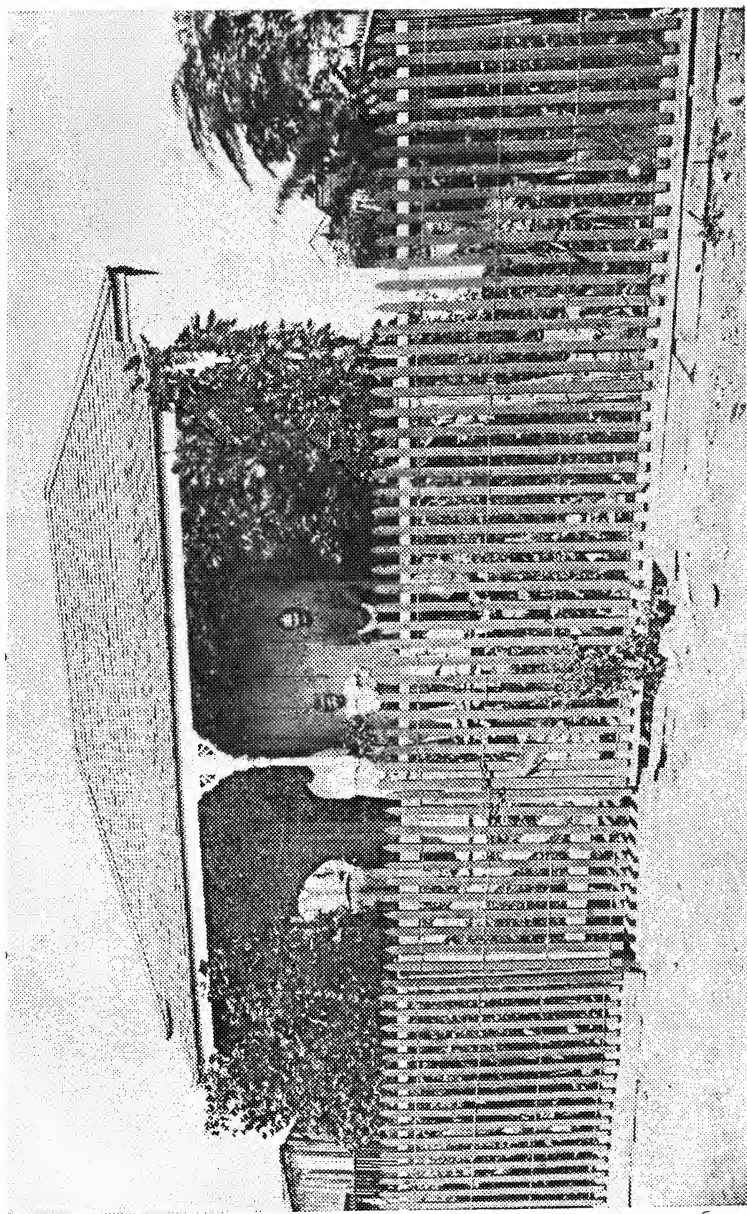
### THE HOUSE THAT IS THE PROBLEM.

Accurately, however, it is shown by this census that 18% of the families of Dallas reside in houses for which they pay a rental of less than \$10 a month. And, parenthetically, it is recalled that Dr. Stelzle's comment upon houses of this kind was: "Take it from me, you can't get much of a house in Dallas for less than \$10 a month."

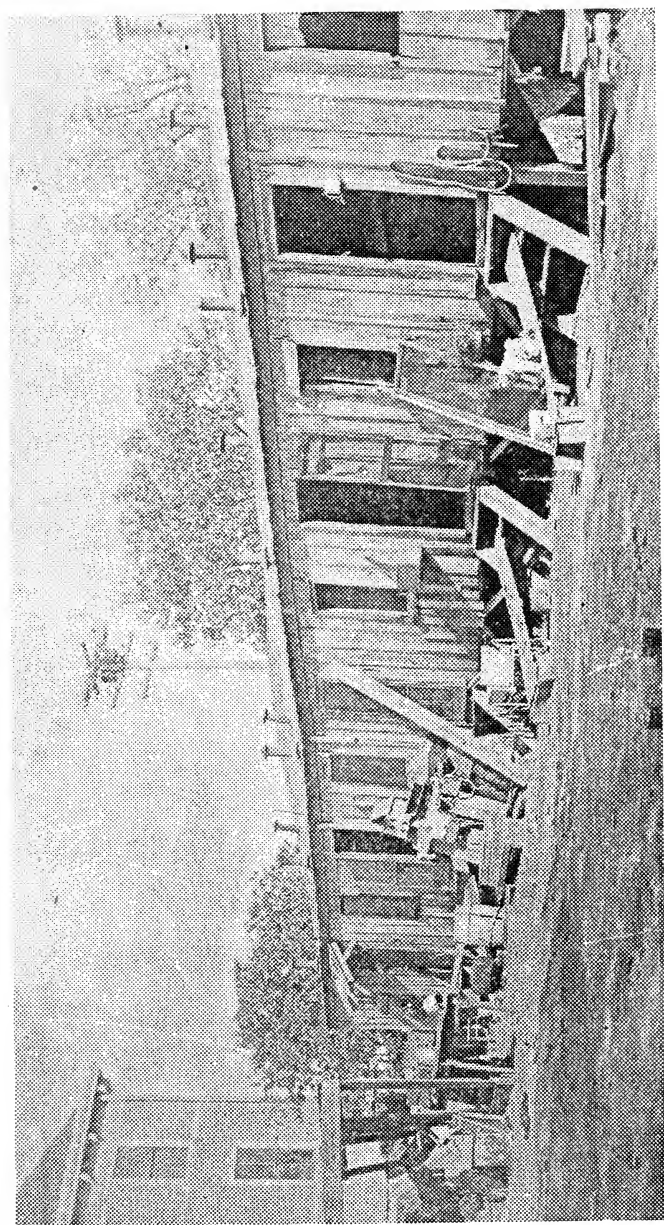
Add to this 18% the 21% of families who reside in houses for which they pay a rental of from \$10 to \$15 a month, and the importance of proper housing to the entire community is shown by the numerical scope of the people it immediately affects, nearly 40% of the population of Dallas living in houses that rent for \$15 a month and less—the type of house that presents the housing problem in Dallas.

Speaking generally, not with one, but hundreds of examples in mind, in so far as physical deficiencies are concerned, the housing problem of Dallas manifests itself in three distinct phases, namely, the house itself, its equipment, and the smallness of the lot upon which it is built. As time goes on, conditions that were at first in no wise satisfactory are made worse by the wearing effects of natural deterioration. About the only differences between an old house of this type and a new one is that the latter is less ramshackle in appearance.

To the house itself, those who have undertaken to provide accommodations for the laboring people have accorded little attention. It is planned as a rule to embrace from three to six rooms, the architectural principle of the "shotgun" house being usually followed. This "shotgun" dwelling is the bane of housing experts throughout the world. It derives its name from the single-barrel appearance created by the succession of rooms, one behind the other, connected by doors that are cut also on a direct line. Sometimes this house appears as a



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

"single-barrel gun." Again, two are attached by a partition wall and made to form two separate apartments, each with its own front and back doors. Entrance to one room is effected only by passage through another, thereby destroying whatever element of privacy a small house may retain.

Windows are small and afford no more light than ventilation. Draughts can not be closed and in the winter months colds are widely present. The houses are not ceiled and the wall coverings are the cheapest of paper which becomes the nesting place of myriads of germs as it begins to break and hang down in long, dirty, unsightly folds. Roofs soon begin to leak and are but infrequently properly repaired. The house itself—its construction and appearance—has nothing in common with lofty conceptions of a home. It has none of the picturesqueness of the vine-clad cottage, the log cabin nor the thatched hut in the dell which the poets have endeared to us in sentimental rhyme. It is a cold-blooded, hard, business proposition that embraces only those things elemental in its renting capacity—walls, windows, roofs, doors. With the formation of an enclosure, its construction ends. There is no evidence of effort to give a home-like appearance. No attempt is shown to please the eye nor to relieve the dull monotony of sameness and plainness. The impression uppermost in the mind of him who views it is that the building was erected upon the theory that the cheaper the construction and the greater the rent that may be collected for occupancy, the better, all told, is the investment. And in dollars and cents this is undoubtedly true; but in social economy it is an ever continuing waste.

Running water in the house is an anomaly in this realm of neglected tenantry, and that laboring man may count himself lucky who has his own private hydrant, though it be remote from the house in some inconvenient corner of the yard. As a rule he has to share his water supply with his neighbor, who, to be sure, is not very far away, and frequently he is merely one of four, and even five consumers, who obtain their water from a common pipe. Some there are who are without water facilities save a flowing well located fifty or a hundred yards away.

Kitchen sinks are another rare specimen of sanitary devices found in workmen's homes, and the immediate consequence of this deficiency manifests itself in the dishwater and soapsuds that surround the doorstep. Like the Irishman who declined to purchase a trunk to put his clothes in because he refused to appear undressed in public, the typical laborer's house has no need of closets. At least, it doesn't have them. Fireplaces are few, screens are a luxury and sewerage is something virtually unheard of. Surface outhouses are the rule, and one of the most deplorable defects of the whole system is the multiple service they are required to perform. There are frequent instances of four families using one closet—and they have to keep that locked to prevent public intrusion.

### BATHTUBS? FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Then—the bathtub. Society has a pharisaical antipathy to rubbing elbows on the streets with people of uncouth appearance and unclean clothes. And yet society rarely thinks, as she holds herself aloof, that these people equally understand that cleanliness is next to godliness; that they, too, realize that soap and water are sanitary agencies contributing to moral as well as to physical health, and that all they ask is an opportunity to apply to themselves the same sanitary regulations and media that are the handmaidens of the elite. Society does not think this, perhaps; and yet it is true. Anyone who has seen a tired mother carrying bucket after bucket of water from an outside hydrant to a large-size dishpan in the kitchen in which to bathe in turn each of her half-dozen children, will not pause to ponder long upon the rational hypothesis that poor people as well as the rich like to be clean. They want to be clean—but they haven't the chance. If one speak of bathtubs in the houses of laborers he subjects himself to the supercilious ridicule of those who pretend to expert knowledge of the ways of laborers. "Bathtubs?" some one will smile, indulgently. "Why, what would they do with bathtubs? Store coal in them?" And yet social workers who have spent their lives among the poor emphatically assert that this implication is as unfounded as it is ungenerous. Nevertheless, the idea prevails pretty widely that such would be the use to which many of the laboring people would put their bathtubs were they provided with them by the owners of the houses they occupy.

Whatever may be the reason for this inadequacy of equipment, it is a defect in housing common to the workingmen's districts of all Texas cities. In truth a bathtub is a curiosity, if scarcity endows things with curiousness. And, this in a country where the temperature is above 80 degrees during half of the year.

The proximity of the houses one to another is one of the most striking blemishes of the system by which the laboring people are sheltered. Two houses on a thirty-foot lot are by no means a rarity. Stretches of small dwellings, separated by no greater distance than a youth can jump—house after house of the same gloomy, depressing type, having the same paucity of equipment and lack of fitness for human habitation—are common enough to excite only trivial comment. Thirty of such structures on one lot hardly large enough to accommodate comfortably one-third the number; others in smaller but no less dejected groups, tucked away from view behind large, imposing buildings; single houses, double houses and detached houses in clusters of twos and threes—of such unattractive scenes there is a plenitude in Dallas, and most of them, if not all, are peopled with human beings who aspire to something better, who yearn for decency, but who lose their opportunity for elevating themselves in the cold, merciless necessity of keeping body and soul together by the blood-sweat of their brows. They want better things. They can not attain them without help.

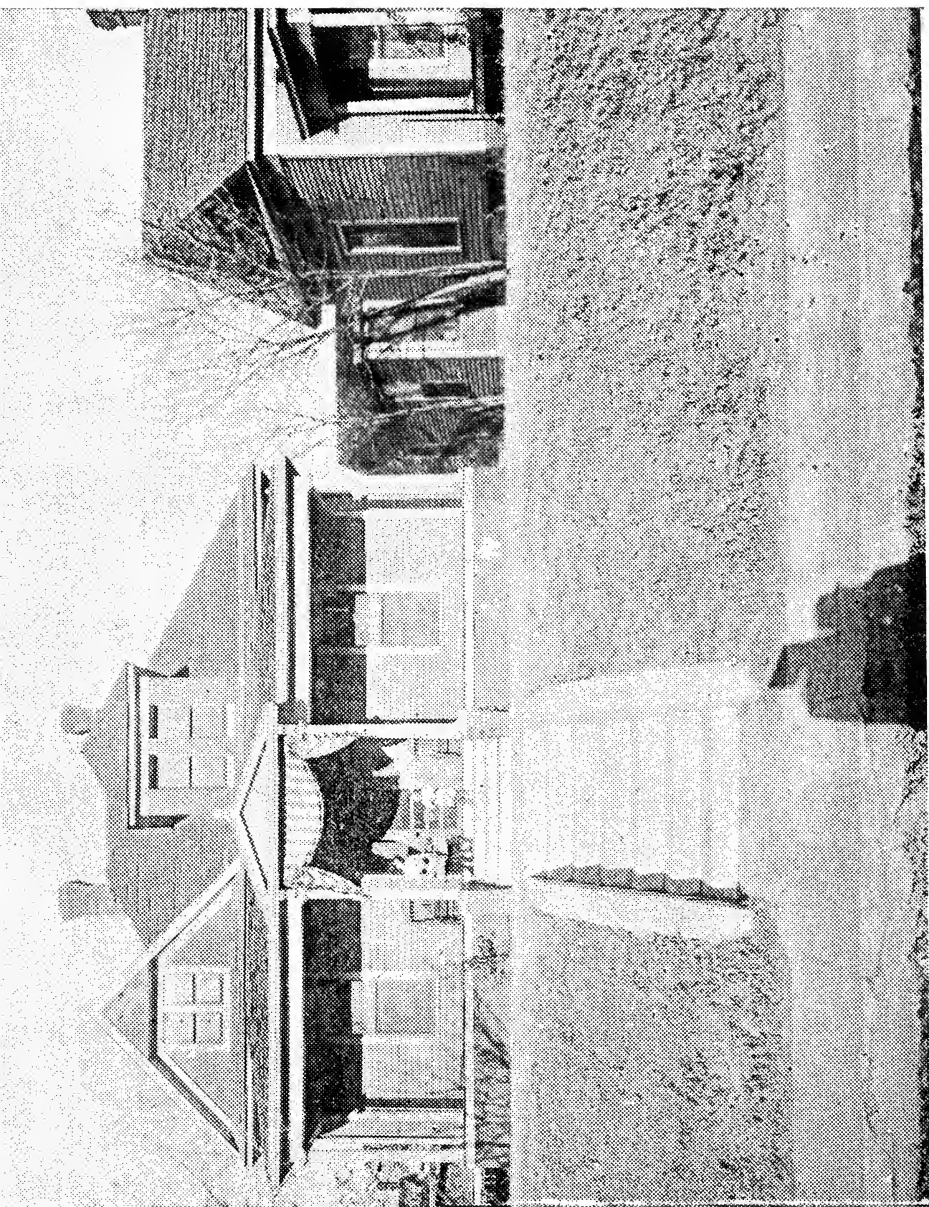
And yet another picture. Here is a row of detached houses, fifteen or twenty in number, facing an alley. Less than ten feet of space separates them one from another. Not a modern household convenience is found in the row. Passing around the structures one is somewhat surprised, perhaps, to find another row of the same type of construction backed up against the first, facing in the opposite direction. Clothes lines run from one house to another forming a veritable network of wires above the yard. The drying linen from some of the well-to-do homes of Dallas is exposed to the contaminating influences of a yard that defies description. Little outhouses are jammed into the restricted area between the dwellings, emitting nauseating odor, and otherwise evidencing the vilest of sanitary neglect. Indescribable stench comes from vacant houses, the late occupants of which have not yet returned from the cotton fields. Even the negroes revolt, at times, at the multiple use of unsanitary closets, and following their sordid instincts, break the insecure locks of vacant dwellings and convert them into reeking quagmires of fecal wastes.

Negroes? Yes, for the most part, negroes live there. But, yonder, bending over a washtub amid these physical surroundings, is a white woman, emaciated and worn with the pangs of poverty and the innumerable cares that fall to the lot of "the other half." Her husband was a laborer whose earning power yielded his family an average of \$2 a day. He drank, abused her, became shiftless and sought to impose upon his feeble helpmate the burden of the family's support. She left him, and taking her mother and child, sought refuge in this inferno of physical and moral filth.

"It's the best I can do, sir, right now," she said, wiping the soap suds from her eyes with the corner of her apron. She said it was soap suds. She was too brave to cry and then the little toddler at her knees would look in round-eyed amazement, and wonder, in the anguish of his little mind, what the matter was.

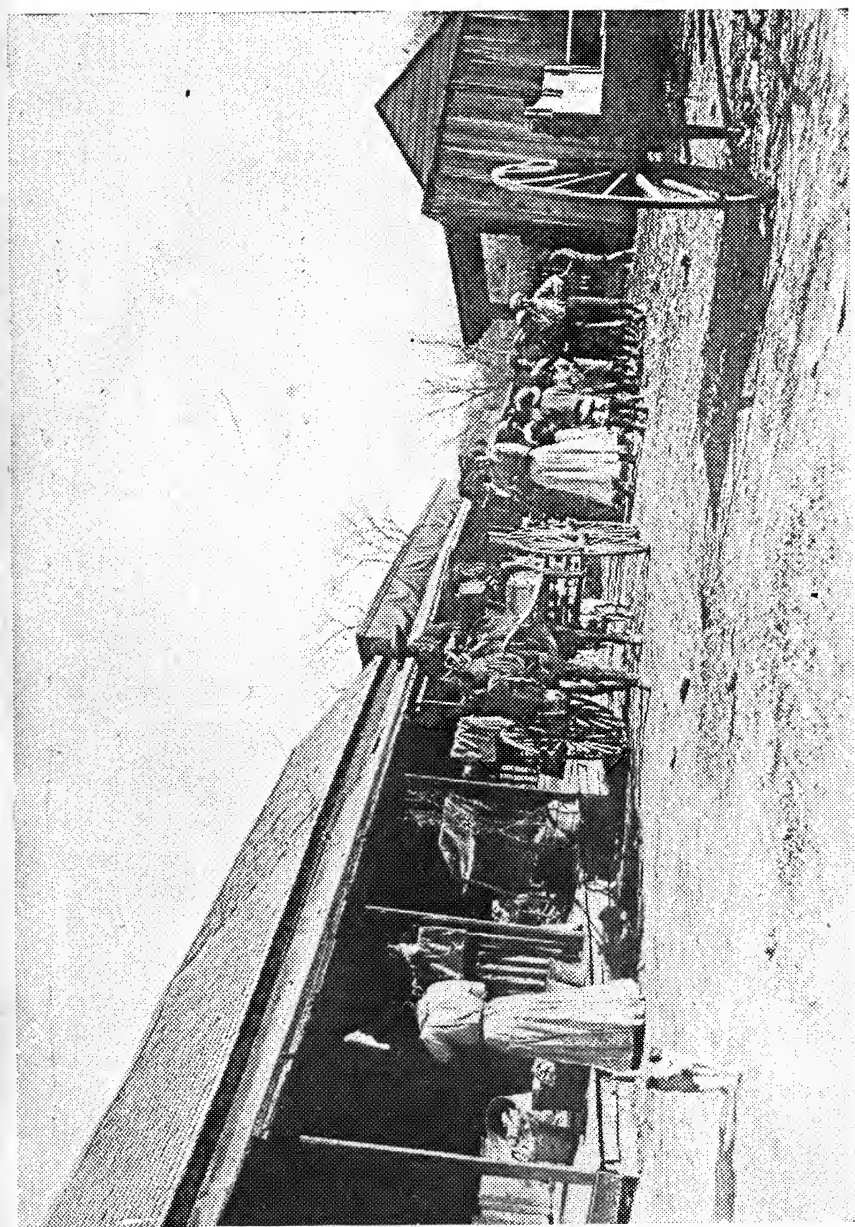
And for this she paid \$1.50 a week. The house she lived in could be duplicated at a cost of less than \$200. Including the value of the lot actually occupied by and assigned to the house; considering insurance, taxes and all other unavoidable expenses, a generous-minded calculation of the investment and its yield would reveal a revenue pretty close to 25%.

Take another section of the town, typical of such conditions. Here is a row of double "shotgun" houses on lots of thirty feet. They are occupied by the families of white wage-earners whose revenue runs from \$10 to \$15 a week. Back yards are cluttered with trash. The premises are unsightly. The house is ramshackle—about to tumble down, one involuntarily observes. A double outhouse is seen in the rear, of the unsanitary type. There is a hydrant on the property line. Four families use it for their water supply. The windows are broken and unscreened. The roof shows to the eye its need of repair. The whole situation is repugnant to a refined sense. And for it all two families pay \$8 a month—\$4 a side. In the same neighborhood are houses of the same type



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS,"





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

and construction that bring \$10—\$5 a family. The sum of \$400 would build a vastly superior structure.

These scenes are merely typical of conditions that prevail in those sections of Dallas that are occupied by laboring people. They can be seen without trouble by those who are interested in philanthropic work. They exist—all over town. And the only way to acquire a proper understanding of what the laboring man is actually confronted, bound and stunted by, is to observe for one's self. Personal inspection of these sections will vindicate the conservatism of these lines.

## **PROMINENT AND IMMEDIATE NEED OF THE CITY IS THOROUGH CLEANING**

(From Issue of Nov. 23.)

A survey of Dallas, especially an intimate inspection of districts largely given over to the residences of working people of small means, will disclose in striking detail, extensive premises that need primarily a good cleaning. Back yards, and sometimes alleys, are frequently cluttered with a heterogeneous mass of unsightly trash and viscous filth which would reveal, under qualitative analysis, an unlimited variety of constituent poisons. The gamut of noxious agencies is run in some of the back yards of Dallas, from typhoid germs conveyed from prolific cultures of manure heaps by the typhoid fly, to vile contagion liberated by the disintegration of fecal wastes of human beings, to be disseminated throughout a community through a half a dozen channels of infection. How long conditions of this kind have prevailed no one knows. Their cause is measureably hard to determine, though the extent of their prevalence is sufficient to stamp entire communities with the brand of unwholesome characteristics. This, however, is not a condition peculiar to Dallas; it is merely typical of situations that are found in other cities of the State as well.

There are in Dallas five sanitary inspectors whose duty it is to inspect premises within the city and enforce the sanitary code. They answer all calls that are made upon the health department, make regular inspections of their several territories and compel where they can strict obedience to the health laws. They are diligent, conscientious workers and none accuses them of incompetency. When asked why, in the face of inspection, menacing conditions were found in the city, the secretary of the Board of Health answered in a twinkling:

"We haven't got men enough."

The territory given to each inspector is considered too large for him to cover. It has been estimated that sixty days would be required for inspectors to examine minutely every house in their several districts. Premises in certain sections of the city seem to get dirty very quickly. Some people have a disposition to be obstinate merely because they are told to perform a certain duty imposed upon them by law. The obduracy of a woman who was recently fined \$100 twice for declining to obey instructions of the health department thoroughly illustrates this trait. When an inspector finds premises requiring cleaning, he fixes a time again-t which the change must be made. He very frequently must return several times before his orders are complied with. This consumes his time and interferes with the efficiency of his work in so far as it is to be judged by the results he accomplishes.

In connection with this topic one of the inspectors of Dallas gave the writer something of a remarkable comment upon the opposition he meets in the pursuit



of his official duties. The small wage-earner, the negro and the foreigner give the department its least trouble. "They will do what you tell them to do," he said, "but you have to keep telling them. There are some you must tell every time, but they obey. All I am called upon to do is to suggest that they haven't \$5 to throw away on a Police Court fine. It is the real estate men and the men who own a great deal of rental property that give us the most trouble."

### NONRESIDENT OWNERS CAUSE DELAY.

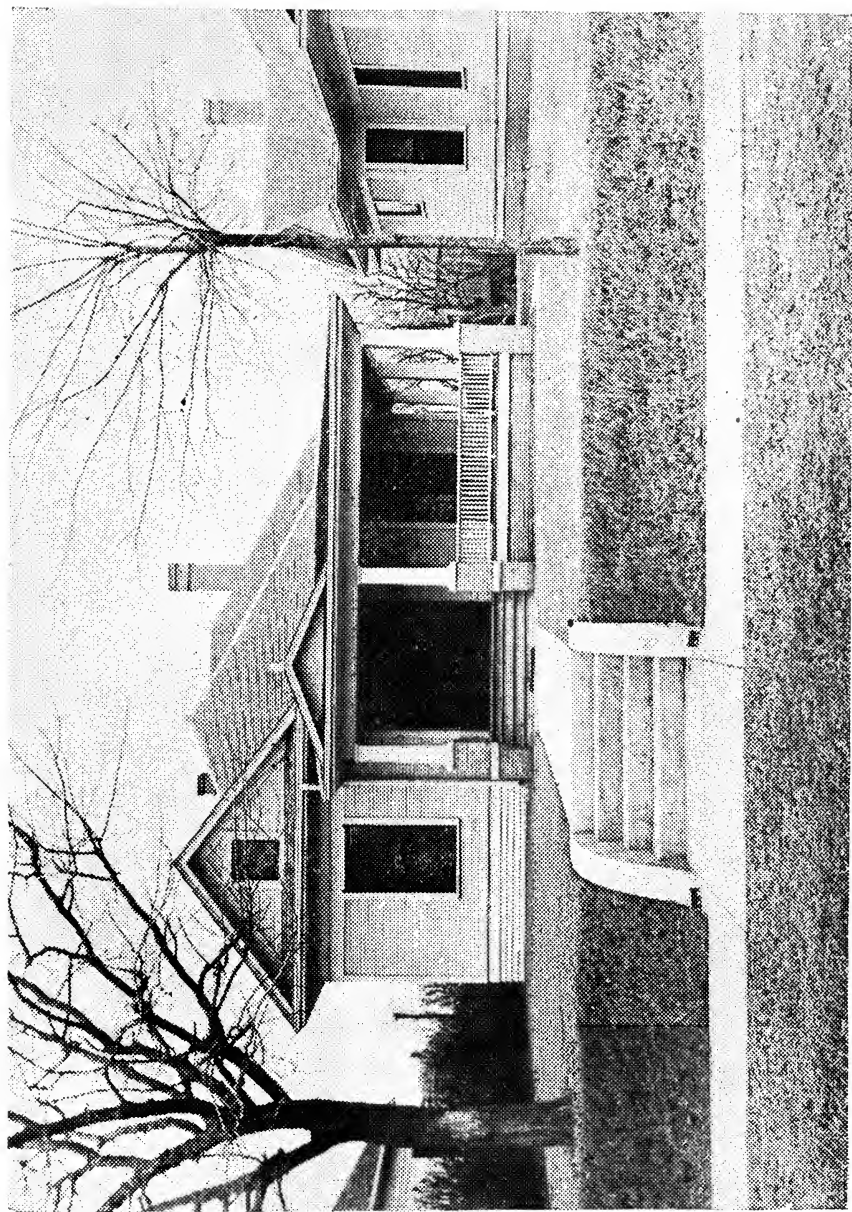
It is further learned from the department of health that about one-third of its "snags," or hard cases to get results from, concern property that is owned by nonresidents. Many nonresident owners of rental property have instructed their agents not to pay for the driving of a nail, nor to assume any expense no matter how trivial without their written orders. For this reason cold weather frequently kills weeds in the yards of such property, when it chances to be vacant, before the health department is enabled to get in touch with the owner and receive his sanction to the assumption of the slight expense involved.

It is not always possible to hold the agent responsible for the condition of the property over which he has charge. He sometimes evades action upon the plea that his control of the premises extends only to the collection of rents. The sanitary inspectors know of instances of agent's taking down their agency signs from property when the department sought to hold them responsible for the condition of the premises. "It creates a difficult situation," said the secretary, "when we want to have certain premises cleaned up or repaired and find the owner is in Michigan."

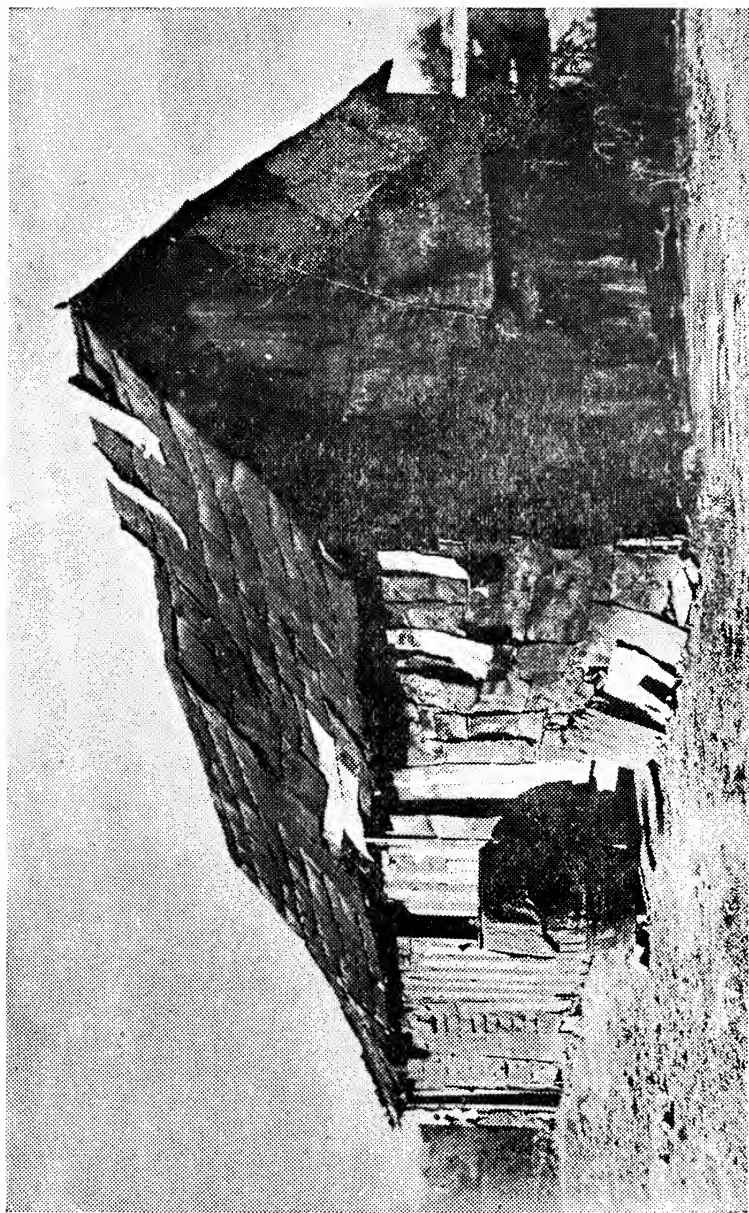
By process of law, the health department has authority to vacate a house that is deemed too unsanitary for human habitation. It can not be done by the order of the inspectors, nor is the power frequently exercised. There is no instance on record of such action by Dallas authorities because of the ramshackle condition of the house, nor because of its location with respect to other houses, its lack of sanitary conveniences nor the absence of other elements necessary to its proper equipment as a home. It must be a public menace. Not long ago the department's attention was attracted to a house in the city against which a vacating order was contemplated as a means of protecting health. The yard around the house had been filled, but the area beneath the building was allowed to remain at its original level. The result of this situation was to cause a drainage of the yard to the area under the house, creating conditions unwholesome and menacing to the entire community. Had the level of the house-space not been raised—and there was some difficulty found in enforcing the department's order—it was planned to exercise the department's vacating power through, of course, the judicial channels.

The city carries away the trash that collects in the resident districts, but there its service ends. It makes no disposal of garbage. Tin cans, boxes and trash of that kind which accumulates around a house are hauled to the dumping grounds without charge, the city having six trash wagons for this purpose; but the garbage, the slops of the kitchen, the refuse from the table, in fact, the very things in which disease is bred when decomposition begins, is not disposed of by the city. Each house owner or occupant must make a private contract for the hauling away of this; and the drivers of the trash wagons are instructed not to take even a pile of cans that contain perchance an orange skin or a handful of apple peelings. "Your trash pile will stay on the sidewalk," said a sanitary inspector, "until you take all the garbage out of it."

This inspector said that it is his practice to tell the woman of the house that the disposal of garbage is a matter for her solution, admonishing her, however, against allowing the premises to become filthy and instructing her not to throw the kitchen refuse in the alley or in the street.



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

## INADEQUATE SYSTEM OF SEWERAGE COMPLICATES THE HOUSING PROBLEM

(From Issue of Nov. 24.)

Unless facilities for thorough sanitation be provided by a community, there can be no adequate system of housing. There must be running water, drainage and sewerage to preclude the arising of unsanitary conditions menacing to the health of the community and shameful to its ideals of civilization, which, without these elementary preventives, are unavoidable. In regard to none of these three essentials to good housing does the city of Dallas meet fully the requirements of modern standards. It is especially in the matter of sewerage that it has been chiefly delinquent and least considerate of the welfare of its people.

There are very few sanitary closets connected with property devoted exclusively to the residence of laboring people. Where this kind is found it is frequently discovered that its use is the common right of more than one family. The evil of such practice is self-evident, viewed either in a moral or a sanitary light. And, moreover, when sanitary sewerage has been employed and the occupants of the house are not compelled to share its usage with others, connection is seldom made indoors, and outside location invariably magnifies the labor of keeping the premises clean. Many of the sanitary closets of this type are sanitary only in the technical terminology of plumbing. Fixtures are soon disarranged by careless tenants or, perhaps, wanton vandals among the obtrusive public; sewer pipes become congested with trash of various kinds that is thrown into them; the flushing apparatus loses its fittings; the door falls off or is torn away, and in a very short time that which would have originally passed the test of practical hygiene has deteriorated into a foul-smelling, infectious source of annoyance and trouble. The same conditions prevail more or less in other Texas cities as will appear in subsequent articles dealing with those cities.

However, the so-called sanitary sewer is largely the exception among the homes of laboring people in Dallas. The poor man's sewer is the surface outhouse—as a rule. How many of this kind there are in Dallas even the Health Department doesn't know. Wherever homes of small wage-earners are found, surface closets are very likely to be observed. But there is one thing which the Health Department does know, and knows with statistical definiteness, a card index system being employed for the record of every instance that comes under its observation. It is this: There are about 500 (the secretary did not count the listed cases, merely estimating them) surface closets in Dallas that are maintained in flagrant violation of law.

In other words, in half a thousand instances in Dallas surface closets are used when the property is within fifty feet of a sewer.

There are many parts of the city that are without sewer mains. The only thing that can be done in this territory is to provide for the use of surface closets or cesspools, and as between the two evils the former is considered by sanitary experts the less dangerous to public health. But in those areas that are equipped with sewer mains, under the law of the city, property owners are compelled to abandon surface outhouses and to provide sanitary closets for the use of their tenants. There are on record instances of disobedience to this law, as has been said, to the number of about 500. This, too, in the face of the clear recitation of the ordinance and the attending penalty for

its infraction of a fine ranging from \$10 to \$100, each day of continued neglect constituting a separate offense.

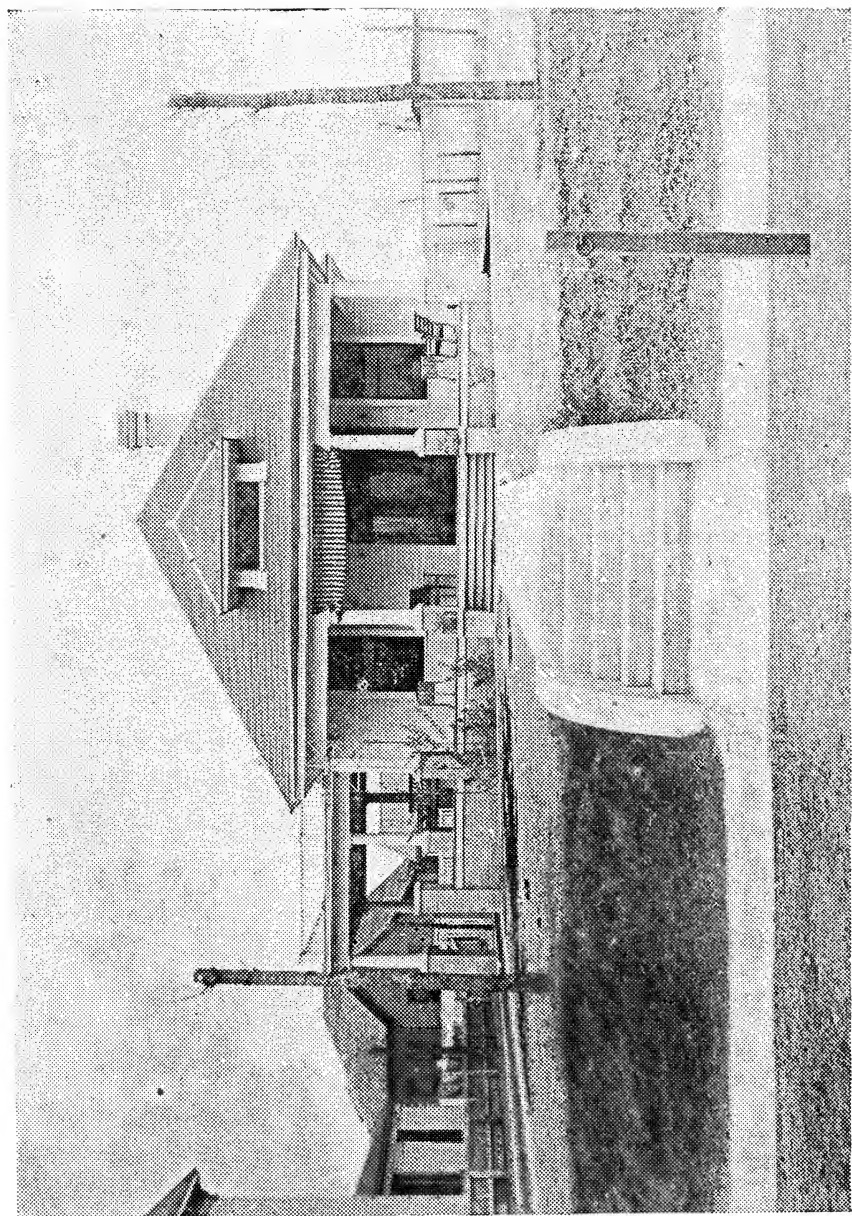
### HOW THE LAW IS ENFORCED.

The Department of Health has some difficulty in securing the enforcement of this ordinance against property owners. Whenever a surface closet is found within fifty feet of a sewer main the owner of the property is immediately notified by formal communication from the Health Department and is ordered to make connection with the sewer within thirty days. When the time has passed the department orders the premises inspected, and if the order has not been heeded complaint is filed against the proprietor in the Corporation Court. There the department's troubles begin, in so far as obtaining immediate results is concerned. Pleas for extension of time are frequently allowed, the secretary of the board informs the writer, and other obstacles that are common to the sluggish processes of the law hinder speedy action. Then, too, the ownership of such property by non-resident proprietors interferes in a measure with the accomplishment of quick results. Outside owners instruct their local agents to make no improvements without their orders, and the obtaining of their permission is sometimes a matter of protracted time. However, the reason is not especially important. The fact remains that there are approximately 500 continuing violations of the city ordinance with respect to this provision of the health code.

Outhouses of this kind are required by law to be cleaned once every sixty days or oftener, as conditions may demand. The work is done under contract with the city, the property owner or the tenant paying for the service himself. Sometimes conditions require weekly cleansing. There are other instances of its being a matter of daily routine. Always, after cleaning, the sinks are disinfected with lime.

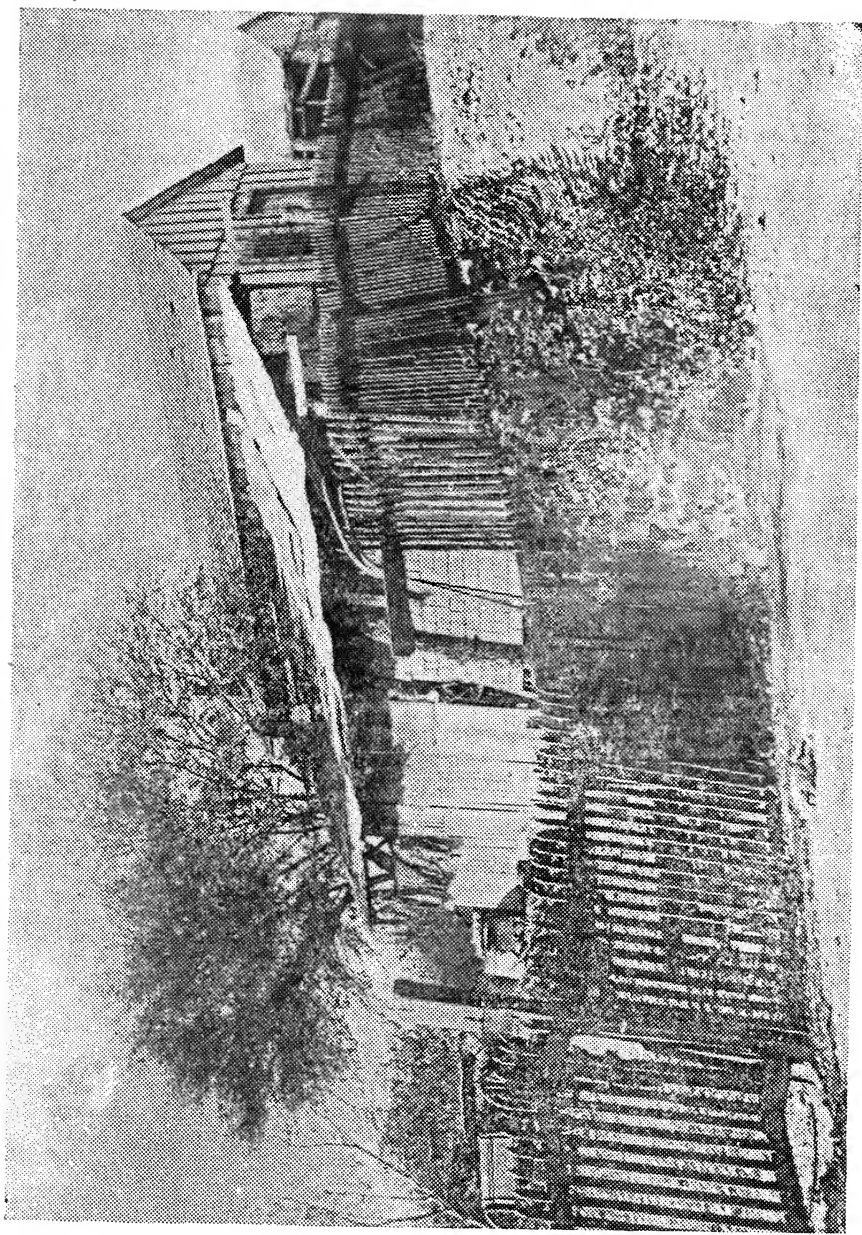
The physical condition of some of these surface closets is very bad indeed. Tenants complain of inadequate cleaning. Others excuse the absence of wooden receptacles by expressing the wish that the inspector could make the landlord provide them, and supplement their implied complaint with a recitation of their repeated efforts to secure proper equipment. But, cleansed every day and maintained constantly in a condition as sanitary and inoffensive as circumstances will permit, this type of closet is its own condemnation. Modern housing laws do not recognize its right to exist, and they condemn it wherever it is possible to abandon it for the satisfactory type. It is both a nuisance to the community and the fertile source of contagion that is carried hither and thither throughout a city by the common houseflies that make it their nesting and feeding place. One of the first steps toward ideal housing conditions is its utter annihilation.

While it is forbidden by law, there are, nevertheless, a few cesspools in Dallas. There are not many, but a few; and, according to statements received at the Health Department, their presence is ascertained largely through the medium of a neighborhood row. When neighbors fall out, they sometimes render valuable information to the municipal authorities. Not very long ago—just a matter of a few weeks—the owner of a piece of property upon which a cesspool had been sunk was ordered to fill up the cavity. The job was poorly done, and inspectors of the Health Department, in an almost futile effort to remedy a bad situation, sunk deep holes in the area and filled them with power-



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

ful disinfectant. It was merely a few days before owners of neighboring properties were threatening to sue the city for contaminating their wells. If it took disinfectant liquids but a few days to permeate the entire community with their flavors, what must have been the possibilities of a chemical analysis of that water during its months of exposure to a neighboring cesspool? An edifying contemplation, unquestionably.

Yes, these are some of the constituent elements of Dallas' housing problem.

## OVERCROWDING OF OCCUPANTS IS NOTICEABLE EVIL IN LABORERS' HOMES

(From Issue of Nov. 25.)

The exterior of the laborer's home—those visible barriers to his broader view of life which have arisen directly from the ignorance and inattention of society—has, for the most part, been the topic of preceding articles on the general subject of housing conditions in Dallas. An attempt has been made to reveal some of the injustices that society imposes upon the unskilled workingman, as revealed by the construction, location and equipment of the house in which he lives. It becomes timely now to open the door to his home and to ascertain some of the injustices which the laborer imposes upon himself, not of his own volition nor because of indifference to an unwholesome manner of living, but because the wage he earns is not sufficient to meet the augmenting expenses of rent, fuel, sustenance and medical attention—expenses that can not be reduced to a minimum standard because of conditions surrounding him of which he can not gain control. In the last analysis, therefore, the misery within the home, which arises from "the habits of the tenants," may be traced to the same source from which emanate the evils of crowded building lots, poor sanitation and ramshackle or unsanitary houses.

A workingman whose daily wage is \$1.50 finds the monthly payment of \$8 or \$10 for the house in which his family lives more of a burden than the natural vicissitudes of his vocation will warrant his assuming. His employment rarely has the advantage of stability. He has work one week and may be unemployed the next. Nevertheless, employed or unemployed, his family must live and grocery bills and rent, physicians' fees and medical expenses must be met. Moreover, it frequently occurs that the house he may rent for \$6 a month or a smaller sum is so manifestly unfit for the habitation of his family that he is willing to make whatever sacrifice he justly may to provide a better. And, shortsighted, to be sure, he will rent the larger house, assume the bigger obligation, in the hope that perhaps things will work out satisfactorily for him and that he will be able to meet successfully the increased expense of living. He makes a short trial of the discouraging task and, failing, commits the inevitable error of bringing outsiders into his home as lodgers and boarders. Then follow the multifarious results of "the lodger evil," together with the innumerable consequences injurious to physical health of the practice of overcrowding.

The detrimental effects upon the health and the degrading results to the morals of men, women and children who are housed together in one room, without sufficient light or air and utterly unrestricted by the common laws of modesty and decency, appear, upon a moment's reflection, as self-evident conclusions. Just a word, therefore, will be used to give the gist of scientific discoveries with respect to this phase of sociological problems.

### OVERCROWDING INCREASES DEATH RATE.

It is an incontrovertible fact, proven time and again by careful experiment, that wherever overcrowding of people prevails the death rate increases. In his *Statistics of Glasgow*, from 1871 to 1880, Russell has shown that the mortality is largely determined by the number of occupants of a room. Where the average number of occupants to each room was 1.31, the general mortality was 21.7 per 1,000; when the average was 2.05 the mortality increased to 28.6 per 1,000. Korosi



of Budapest has proven that the mortality from infectious diseases increases with the increasing number of occupants of houses. Where the occupants do not exceed two the mortality from infectious diseases is 20 per 1,000; 3 to 5 occupants, the mortality runs to 29 per 1,000; 6 to 10 occupants, the mortality reaches 32 per 1,000; and where there are more than ten occupants to each apartment the mortality is advanced to 79 per 1,000. A great variety of statistics could be given in support of this proposition, were it not patent that it is true.

The presence of the tuberculosis bacillus is necessary to consumption, but it is very frequently harmless—in fact, some say entirely so—when it does not find contributing causes. It can not propagate in sterile ground, but in the unhygienic conditions to which many of the laboring people are subjected it finds a fertile culture. And one of the most potential factors in the propagation of consumption is the overcrowding of people in dwellings and the consequent foulness of the air. Says an authority on this subject: "The respiration of impure air directly debilitates the vital powers, enfeebles the nervous system, depresses the appetite, deranges the secretions and leads to the retention of effete matters in the blood."

The moral aspect of overcrowding is more dreadful than the physical, although, perhaps, its moral consequences do not so readily manifest themselves to casual observation. Scientists now contend that bad air leads to intemperance. It debilitates the nervous system, weakens bodily tissues and drives the victim to indulgences that follow, abnormal cravings for stimulants. When the threshold of the home is invaded, the privacy of the family is immediately disturbed. And when living rooms are shared with outsiders the moral evil of overcrowding assumes its most insidious form. Delicacy forbids further intrusion into this unwholesome subject. The normal man and woman should comprehend its vicious possibilities at a glance. The evil is here, as the ensuing examples will disclose.

### CROWDED HOUSES IN DALLAS.

The writer found many houses in the city containing three to five living rooms that were affording lodging to seven to twelve persons. The rooms were small, poorly ventilated and without sanitary conveniences. A "shotgun" house of three rooms—bare walls with doors and windows cut only where they could not be avoided—was one of the first dwellings entered on the survey of a certain portion of the city. In the front room a blind baby was sleeping under a dirty mosquito bar. Its little eyes had never opened to the sunlight. The mother came into the room in answer to the visitor's call. Disorder and dirt were regnant. One of the three rooms was a kitchen. In the other two lived the father, mother, mother-in-law and three children. Six persons to two rooms was the sleeping arrangement there.

Another house of four rooms was visited. A mother and three children were the family of the house. They occupied one room which was the occasional sleeping place of the father when he returned home. One room was a kitchen. The remaining two rooms were given over to the use of five boarders, three in one room, two in another. The woman paid \$10 a month rent for the house. Her boarders paid her \$4 a week for meals and a place to sleep. The rooms were about 10x10 in dimensions. An unsanitary outhouse and a hydrant in the yard provided the premises with all its sanitary conveniences.

In another house, containing nine rooms, three families comprising seventeen people were living in eight rooms. A lone individual occupied the other room. An unsanitary outhouse in the yard was made to serve the uses of eighteen persons. Water was carried into the house from a hydrant in the yard.

Still another house showed twelve persons living in four rooms, most of them adults, two couples of whom were married. Yet another was found to contain five rooms and seventeen occupants. The kitchen was called into service at night and a pallet spread for a man to sleep upon. It was said to be somewhat of a choice location in the winter, as the heat of the stove kept the room warm throughout the greater part of the night. In the morning the bedclothes were rolled up to make way for the breakfast table.

These examples could be cited indefinitely. There are dozens of them that came under the writer's personal observation. Local social workers know of scores of them, and there are, perhaps, even hundreds in the city. The recital

will be brought to a conclusion with one more illustration of the extent to which overcrowding is permitted in Dallas, the last example, however, being doubtless representative of the worst conditions the city reveals. .

Mr. W. G. Leeman, probation officer, accompanied the writer to a house not at all remote from the business section of the city. The first living room entered was about 15 feet wide by 15 feet long. In it there were two double beds and four single beds. The next room was about 12 feet wide by 15 feet long and contained five single beds. Another room was of the same dimensions and contained four single beds. Still another was 8 feet wide by 10 feet long and contained two single beds. Another was 15x15 and contained four single beds. Still another was 10x12 and contained two single beds and one cot. The last was 15x15 and contained three double beds and three single ones. The visitors were told that "eight men slept in that room last night."

Brief computation will show that provisions for the lodging of thirty-five persons are made in seven rooms of this house. A night's lodging costs 15c, 20c or 25c, according to the degrees of comfort involved in the varying expense. The owner of the institution fumigates the entire premises twice a week and takes extreme caution, where it can be taken, to prevent disease. And this instance, though perhaps a bit more extreme in some of its details, is, after all, merely typical of conditions that prevail widely in Dallas.

---

## WHOLESONE MEANS OF RECREATION HELPS TO SOLVE HOUSING PROBLEM

(From Issue of Nov. 26.)

The tenant, himself, is an important factor of the housing problem of Dallas, and until he comes into possession of proper knowledge of living, through education that may be proffered him only by his brothers of the less arduous walks of life, the problem will doubtless continue to remain unsolved. The tenant has been so long neglected, he has been so long dependent almost entirely upon his own meager resources, that he has learned to be satisfied in a measure with that which surrounds him, although an inner yearning for betterment inspires his serious moods to loftier ambitions than his environment would suggest. Generally speaking, he has acquired certain habits during his long period of neglect, that impose serious handicaps upon frequent efforts to relieve him.

In the first place, the laborer's point of view is wrong. This is not his fault, to be sure; it is the result of the ceaseless operation upon his daily life of influences that are beyond his control. Society has permitted false standards to arise which the more competent of society repudiate by virtue of a superior intellectual view, but which, to the laborer, whose entire time is consumed by the difficult task of making a living, appear as inviolable rules of life. And he pays them implicit obedience. Society has yielded too much to the fallacious maxim that "money makes the man," and has stooped too often to judge of one's worth by the clothes he wears. The unskilled workingman regards this as a rule of society and his very ambition to follow it attests an aspiration to elevate himself in the scale of living. He neglects his home to provide presentable garments for himself and family. He disregards the graver needs of his physical being that he may appear well in public—meeting the false standards of estimate which he thinks society judges him by. In consequence, the surplus of his meager wage—if there be a surplus—goes not into his home, but upon his back. The home is more or less of a secondary consideration with him and his family. At the same time, he wants a better home. That proposition is hardly open to controversy among social workers who have intimate knowledge of social

problems. The laborer's inability to assist himself to more advantage in the procuring of a better home comes, therefore, not from an inherent lack of ambition, but from an innate sentiment of greater potency than his aspiration for a superior home, which impels him in his struggle to meet, not the right, but the false standards of society.

### HOME NOT A PLEASURE PLACE.

The result of this is that the laborer's home degenerates too often into merely a place where eating and sleeping are provided. His social intercourse is sought elsewhere. Arrayed in her best gowns, his daughter seeks her companions on streets, at the dance halls or wherever occasion may bring them together. It is remote from her mind to invite her friends to her home. She has no home. Conditions that will be found to exist there do not comport with the appearance she makes in her Sunday finery. She is ashamed of her hearthstone. She meets her escort at some appointed place on the plea that father would object to the evening's program were he to be aware of it; she leaves him at the corner, two blocks from her home, and runs alone to her door, on the same plea. Her pride, which in a measure is laudable, does not, however, justify the risk she assumes. And in this, if in nothing else, is shown the need of wide expansion of the social center idea during the process of evolving a more substantial and satisfying system of homes for the poorer working people.

The home of the laboring man is not the site of his pleasure-seeking. He and his family go elsewhere for the amusement and recreation which they, in common with all human beings, demand and must have for the living of normal, well-regulated and profitable lives. In assisting him to find the proper kind of recreation, social and charitable institutions of Dallas are doing a beneficial service, but their activities alone are not sufficient to meet present exigencies without the aid of a larger part of society. As it is, they have improved the condition of the workingman and his family immeasurably, and especially have they made success in solving the problems of social intercourse during the summer months. For an example, the public playgrounds in one part of Dallas were patronized by more than 11,000 persons during one month of the late summer. But with the coming of colder weather and its attendant disadvantages, the majority of those people who were well entertained during the summer either do without their moiety of pleasure or seek it elsewhere. The latter conclusion is perhaps the more correct.

When the weather permits the carrying out of social programs such as the social institutions of Dallas provide, the laborers and their families do not want for wholesome recreation and amusement. Dramatic clubs have been organized, in which the patrons and participants manifest active interest. Short dramas and sketches are staged at frequent intervals, and sometimes trips are made to neighboring towns and plays presented to strange audiences with abundant success. Picture shows are operated at stated intervals during the week, and social clubs, composed of the younger set, give lawn parties, dances, hay rides, box suppers, parlor socials and such other entertainments that are capable of yielding innocent enjoyment. The coming of winter has largely put a stop to this means of amusement merely because the people have no place to meet for its continuance.

Hence the great need of social center work during the development of adequate housing systems. It is indispensable, all social workers say, and they

base their conclusions upon careful thought and wide experience. These people must be amused. They must have innocent recreation. The ultimate idea is to make of each laborer's home the place of his chief delight, the rendezvous of his friends and the scene of his daughter's courtship. This can not be attained at once. Its evolution is gradual, and during its progress innocent substitutes must be provided for the streets and the unregulated dance halls. Otherwise, following the natural bent of humanity—who are nothing if not gregarious—they will seek their pleasures wherever opportunity offers enticements.

## TENANT, HIMSELF, NEEDS EDUCATION IN PROPER PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING

(From Issue of Nov. 27.)

A large percentage of the laboring people of Dallas may be properly regarded as a transient population. They are here today and gone tomorrow, calling no place their home, ever seeking a change of scene in their fatuous pursuit of that will-o'-the-wisp which they call their fortunes. Many of them are simply lovers of adventure. They love to roam for the reason that the wanderlust is strong upon them. Moving becomes a habit. Others there are who move from necessity, and in the final analysis it is found that this type perceive the necessity of change in the utter inadequacy of the homes they are required to live in while here. After everything has been said and causative agencies have been resolved into their several parts, the whole situation is reduced to a housing proposition. Prone to wander in the first instance, there is absolutely no way of overcoming this roving spirit without centering affection and interest in a place that may be called home.

Referring to a large manufacturer of Texas, Secretary Babcock of the Chamber of Commerce recently wrote:

"He has told me that the greatest difficulty in the way of manufacturing cotton in the South is the labor situation, and the reasons that mills have developed in the eastern section of the South is because labor conditions were good. He knows, and I know, that they are not good in Dallas; that he has to import every one of his laboring people, and just as soon as he gets them properly broken in to the work, they see the golden visions of prosperity in land in other sections of Texas and away they go. I do feel that if there could be development in Dallas along the lines we have started; for instance, in playgrounds at Trinity Park and other things of a similar nature which would help make life attractive to the laboring people \* \* \* we could, in part, solve the labor problem."

There, in a nutshell, is the answer. Life must be made attractive to these people to hold them here, to cultivate in them a commendable pride of home, to develop in them the qualifications of good citizenship, and to make of them contributors to, as well as sharers in, the general advancement and benefits of society. Motives of self-interest and altruistic sentiment alike demand this much. Their roving disposition manifests itself in their movement about the city as well as in their departure from it. They move into a house which did not please them at first, and which soon displeases them to the point of irritation. They are not disposed to be considerate of that for which they have contempt, and, consequently, they are sometimes hard tenants and prone to abuse the property upon which they reside. Their homes have not been equipped with sanitary conveniences, and soon they look upon such expenditures for which they, not the landlord, must pay in higher rents, and, therefore, they do not demand them. They want to be clean, they want to bathe, but they can not afford to pay an increased rental for the privilege of a bathtub. They use the family dishpan or patronize the public baths, where they can be had. And their patronage of the public baths is a strong argument against the disingenuous comment that laboring people wouldn't know what to do with bathtubs if they had them. A few figures concerning their use of public baths in Dallas might be of importance in connection with this discussion.

### USE OF PUBLIC BATHS.

During July of this year 11,069 persons attended the playgrounds at Trinity Park. Of these, 1,416 enjoyed the baths obtainable there without charge. In August the attendance reached 11,469 persons. Twenty-two hundred and thirty-eight of these bathed at the playground bathhouse. The September attendance was 10,168, and of these 1,294 used the baths. The coming of colder weather reduced the October attendance to 6,163 and brought the total number of baths down to 728. These figures might be very much larger if public bathing facilities were more adequate. And yet people need recreation and amusement and baths, too, just as much in October as they do in midsummer. The amusements they seek elsewhere; the baths they procure at home in the family dishpan or go without. Nevertheless, the fact that the average daily number of baths taken at the playgrounds has gone close to 100 in August, despite the inconvenience of walking a considerable distance and carrying clean linen and underwear through the streets and returning with the soiled, makes a fairly forcible argument that these people want to bathe and are kept from frequent use of water only by the absence of bathing facilities or their remoteness.

Again, inadequate inspection of premises for the purpose of enforcing sanitary restrictions has made them careless of conditions that surround them.

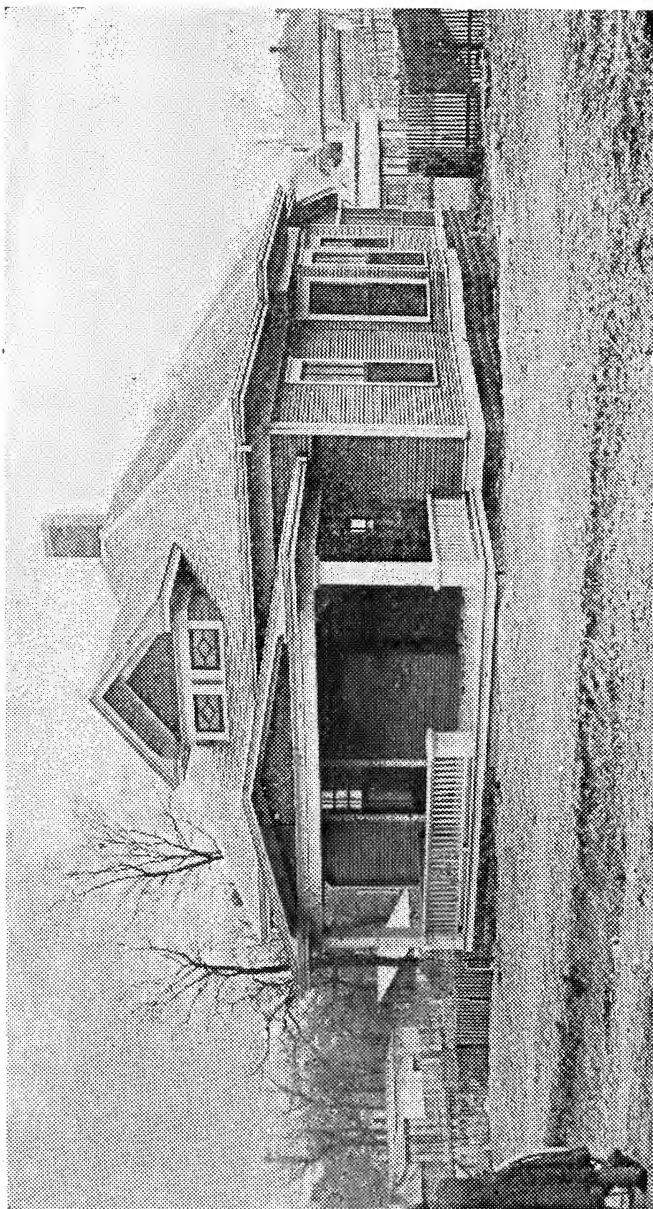
Many of the houses sit high from the ground upon stilts, but for the most part they are built close to the ground, with barely space enough between the foundation beam and the earth for a small child to crawl through. But no matter what the height from the ground, few of the houses have their nether spaces inclosed, neither boarding nor latticework being used. Now, beneath the house only the children and the dogs go. Consequently, that part of the premises affords a good out-of-the-way place for the concealment of the trash that accumulates around the house. And under the house it usually goes, being swept there by the housewife in an effort to make the surroundings present a fairly decent appearance.

The constant moving from house to house does not, as some would think, bring about efforts on the part of landlords or the city to fumigate and disinfect the premises after the departure of each family. On the contrary, the only disinfecting that is done by the city concerns premises where cases of contagious diseases have prevailed. Sometimes newcomers, especially people from the North, according to the secretary of the Board of Health, apply to the city for a means of disinfecting their newly-acquired residences. This request is always complied with, but only where the more virulent of contagious diseases have prevailed does the city of its own volition take such precaution against the communication of infection. Consequently, time and time again, according to dependable information, a family will move out with the corpse of a consumptive, another family will move in—and no measures will be taken to prevent the communication of tuberculosis to the incoming residents. Tenants, as a rule, are not careful in expectoration, and consumptives, themselves, do not always take proper precautions against infecting others. This is noticeably true where the premises are of such nature as not to inspire respect, and the idea that is frequently prevalent, that the occupants will be there but for a short while, anyway, often leads to an exaggeration of the evil of spitting.

### BUILDINGS OF LASTING INFECTION.

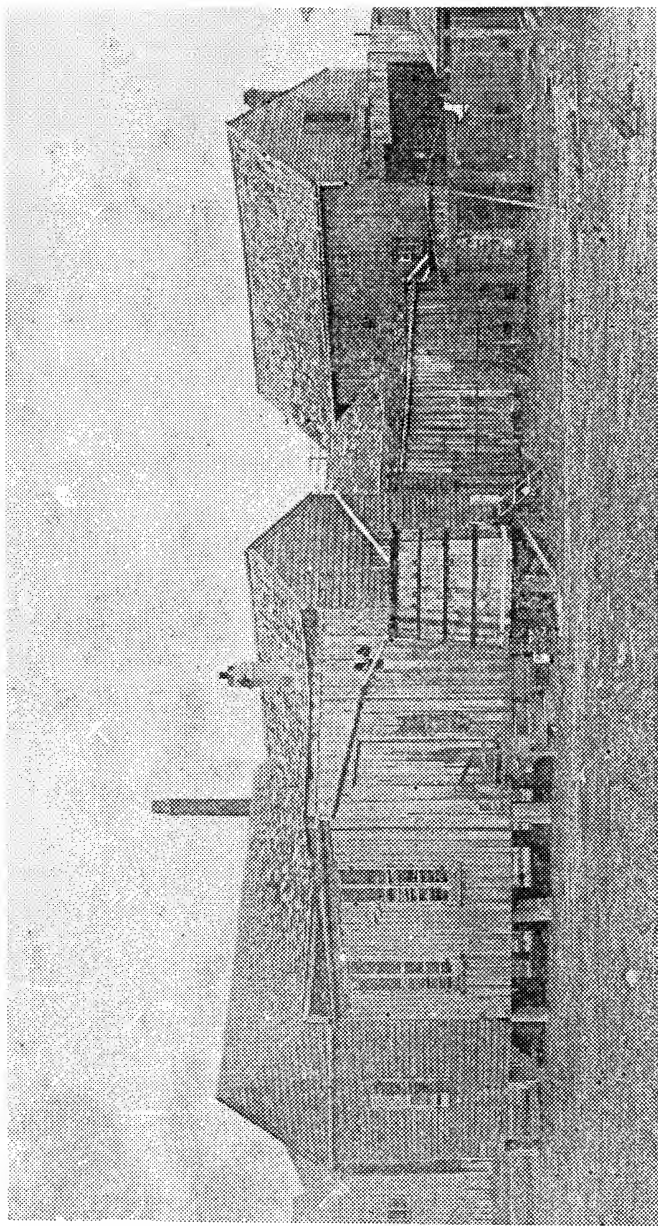
That houses may become permanently infected by the tubercle bacilli is thoroughly appreciated by the medical profession and is evidenced by the repetition of cases of tuberculosis in the same environment. Sputum that is expectorated upon the floors or walls of a house quickly dries and is converted into dust to liberate the consumptive germs and pervade the entire room with their contagion. Dust of this kind, it is authoritatively written, remains virulent for months, and even years, when it is deposited in rooms that are not thoroughly renovated and disinfected when the presence of infection first manifests itself. And when it is of long accumulation it becomes impossible to render the infection harmless by anything short of destroying the house by fire.

Infectious matter is distributed by frequent change of residence and brings about spread of the disease. As victims grow weaker from the ravages of their plague, their earning power becomes more reduced and they gradually descend



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

to the lowest scale of housing, as the worst conditions are usually found in the cheapest houses. And the constant depositing of infectious matter brings about eventually the infected house, concerning which Dr. Arthur R. Guerard, assistant bacteriologist of New York, makes this startling statement:

"The conclusions arrived at by these competent observers tally exactly with those reached by the writer, namely, that tuberculosis is not uniformly diffused throughout a community, not even in those localities where the disease is most prevalent, but is confined within narrow limits, as in certain streets and within the walls of certain houses."

It would appear, then, that the tenant, as well as the landlord and society, needs educational assistance in the process of evolving desirable conditions of housing.

## **GALVESTON'S CONSPICUOUS HOUSING PROBLEM IS CROWDING OF DWELLINGS**

(From Issue of Nov. 28.)

Texans unite in extending to Galveston the compliment of their admiration. No city of modern times has been subjected to tests of courage and energy more heroic, nor, in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles, has the success of any been more triumphant.

Galveston, as the world knows, has risen "on stepping-stones of its dead self to higher things," and gazing through the perspective of the past it perceives few mistakes to deplore in its dogged battle against the stupendous odds of Fate. The town has been re-made in a decade, and in its reconstruction many of the disadvantages of the old Galveston have been submerged in the excellence of the new. At the same time, it is in the relics of the old town that modern Galveston finds its housing problem.

When the town of Galveston was laid out its builders planned wisely. It is regularly platted into squares, except along the boundaries of the city where the irregular contour of the land interferes with the regularity of the original scale. A park system has been outlined with arithmetical precision throughout the incorporated area.

A system of alleys cuts the city into half blocks. Only here and there at infrequent intervals has the continuity of this system been broken. The effort, in the planning of the town, manifestly was to provide an amplitude of thoroughfares, not alone to expedite the movement of traffic and to facilitate the exercise of protective means against fire, but also to supply adequate air passages for blocks of buildings which, in the nature of things, could be expected to develop in the midst of a thriving seaport town.

Adhering to the original platting of the city there should never have developed the condition of house-crowding which upon investigation is found to be the striking manifestation of an existing housing problem in Galveston. As the city grew land values appreciated naturally. In the business district, property attained the zenith of its flight and to considerable extent values became variable quantities controlled by proximity to the centers of commercial activity. As the business section augmented neighboring residential properties enjoyed increased values, and the area set apart originally by common usage for the earlier habitation of the island, acquired values that compelled close construction of buildings to realize reasonable and proportionate rentals.

Moreover, in the formative period of Galveston's building, the city was without adequate streets and thoroughfares. The natural formation of the site—sandy and unstable—made the movement of man and beast more or less difficult wherever paving or grading was scant. The impulse of the people, therefore, was to erect their dwellings as near to the center of business as controlling circumstances would permit. Coupled with the agency of appreciating values in the natural course of the city's development, this influence wrought eventually a housing condition peculiar in Texas to Galveston alone, in that the noticeable deficiency in its housing scheme—the close proximity one to another of its dwellings—is a condition not disclosed by particular sections of the town, but is characteristic of the entire city. In the sections occupied by laboring people.

every inch of available space, figuratively speaking, which a lot affords has been utilized. The same is true of districts wherein are found the homes of the rich.

Leaving the business section on a tour of inspection, it matters not in what direction one proceeds, his first glimpse of residences will almost invariably reveal this condition of house congestion. Looking for deficiencies in the housing system, he will probably seek first the sections of town occupied by the poorer working people, where, experience has taught, are to be found undesirable conditions of housing in their most aggravated form. Passing the centers of the business sections he encounters here and there a group of shanties hemmed in between commercial structures of some pretension to size and elegance, bordering the business area. Beyond the outskirts of the business district the tenant houses begin. The crowded aspect of the section is its remarkable characteristic. Here is a ninety-foot lot occupied by four small houses. A rapid mental calculation apportions the lot into four parts, each about twenty-two feet wide. If any space has been left between the buildings for air purposes or to facilitate the repair of one without tearing down the other, the spectator begins to wonder where the occupants found room in one of the houses for the piano from which are issuing the plaintive strains of a popular love song.

### CAN CONVERSE FROM PORCH TO PORCH.

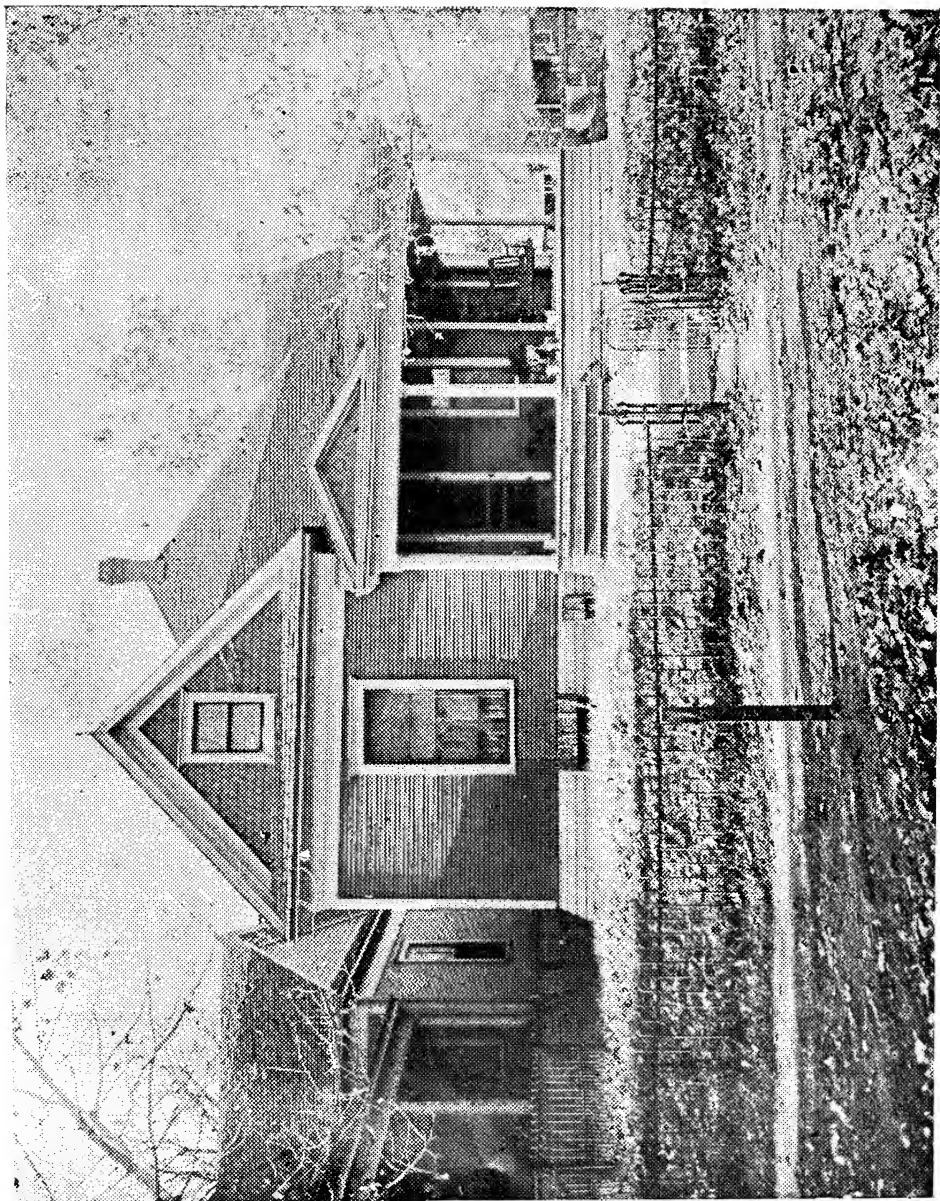
The observer turns the corner and looks into the fronts of a battery of small houses, glowering like the muzzles of the shotguns for which they have been appropriately named. It is a warm, pleasant morning and busy housewives are observed about their daily routine of cleaning up. Two, standing upon small squares of wood-work which they would designate as their respective front porches, are conversing across the intervening space. The elderly woman must be occupying herself with a disquisition upon the merits of a brand-new broom which she fondles rather affectionately as she speaks of it to her youthful neighbor. The latter is interested and smiles appreciatingly as her friend talks. She holds out her hand with a gesture, inviting closer inspection. Her neighbor grasps the handle about the middle part and hands the broom to the woman on the other gallery without stretching her arms to their fullest length. That's how close the houses are in that neighborhood.

Farther down the street a row of negro shacks loom dull and dark from a recess formed by two larger dwellings. Apparently, nothing but a partition wall divides them one from the other. Their fronts are flush to the sidewalk. A crowd of pickaninnies are chasing each other along the street and at the scolding call of some black mammy in the rear disappear down a narrow alley in response. The question how to reach the back yard, if there be a back yard, is immediately solved. The side entrance had not been noticed and would not have been but for the course of the children. It was decidedly no place for a fat man to venture.

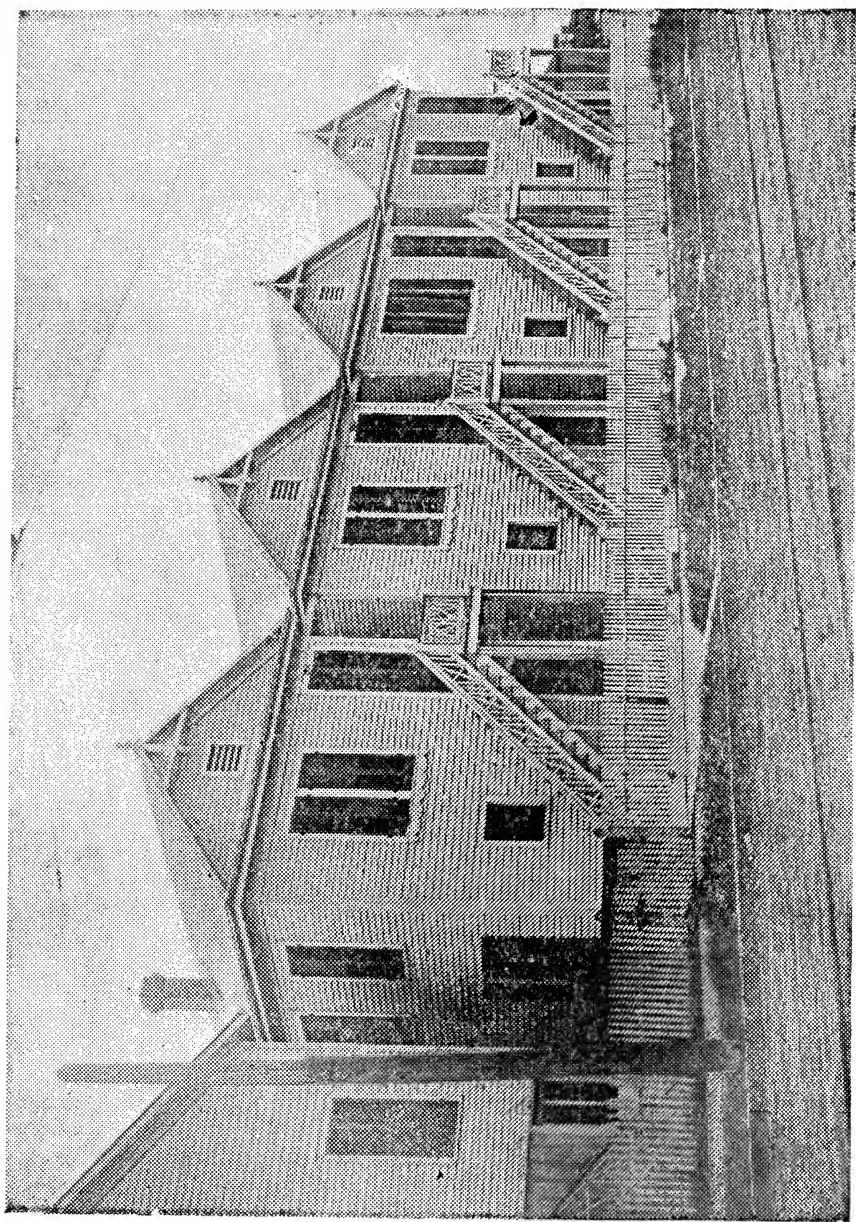
Block after block was traversed. Block after block was crowded with houses. In the majority of instances the houses were built in groups of two, three, four, five and sometimes more. In such cases the same architectural design characterized the groups, one plan being sufficient for all. Between each two of this type of house the space invariably was virtually nil. The thought was suggested that perhaps identity of plan was in some way responsible for the crowding. But that thought vanished with further revelations. Here was a row of large houses. Each embodied a distinct architectural scheme. Some were two-story structures; others were large cottages. No two of them were separated by space sufficiently wide to permit the passage of a horse and rider.

### LARGE HOUSES CLOSE TOGETHER.

Here was a block facing one of the car lines of the city. The houses were constructed in groups of similar designs. At the corner stood two two-story structures. Between them there was barely room for a fence. Adjoining were two cottages, then came a group of three. Beyond was a row of three two-story dwellings. Adjoining was a large house of individual planning. Beyond it were three others of different architecture, large and in themselves roomy and apparently comfortable. Now pause to calculate a moment. The block measured 300 feet in length. It contained fourteen houses. A little bit more than twenty-



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS,"



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."



one foot to the house was the average ground base. Shallow yards, cut off by picket fences, separated the dwellings from the sidewalk.

The increasing frequency of small flower beds indicated that the survey was working back to the residential districts occupied by the more affluent of Galveston's citizens. A corner was turned and as far as the eye could reach handsome dwellings were discerned. Palm gardens there were in abundance. Oleanders bloomed in the warmth of glorious Indian summer. Here was a stately mansion surrounded by well-kept lawns and rose-beds. Adjoining was another handsome residence. Then came the shock.

Massed together were a series of four large, pretentious houses. Of individual structure and having each its attractive lawn and flower bed in front, they all bore the outward aspect of homes—the physical embodiment of happy life within—save for the manifest absence of privacy. Here in the heart of the residential section of the wealthy, as in the cottages of the dock-workers and the poor, the same proximity of houses was found. And while the wives of neighboring laborers could swap yarns and brooms from their galleries, the maids and butlers of the rich could flirt, pass amorous notes, yea—if they could avoid detection—and even press an osculatory caress upon tender lips as they leaned slightly out of upstairs windows to court across the narrow chasm that divided them.

On this block and on that, the same condition prevails. In some instances but a few inches of space separates the structures, and an unspoken and at the same time an unanswered question suggests itself: How did the carpenters nail up the adjoining walls? To an untechnical mind no rational explanation occurs.

This is Galveston's conspicuous housing problem. The crowding of houses prevails throughout the built-up sections of the town without regard to the social fortunes of the people who occupy them. The mere condition of crowding is equally apparent on Broadway and along the streets upon which the dock-workers have erected their homes. Houses have been constructed without restrictions imposed by municipal law. The people have not thought, perhaps, of the evils consequent upon congestion of their living territory, and they have erected their homes neglectful of a principle of housing upon which not alone depends protection against fire and other dangers, but from which comes also that greatest attribute of home life, so indispensable to proper conditions of living and the rearing of children—privacy—aloofness from the outside world once the threshold of the home shall have been passed.

---

## REAR TENEMENTS CONGEST MANY OF GALVESTON'S RESIDENTIAL AREAS

(From Issue of Nov. 29.)

The crowding of houses in Galveston has previously been shown only from a front view, as it were. The great disadvantage of such conditions as they are regarded from that viewpoint consists chiefly in the elimination of the element of privacy in the home life of the families who abide in houses thrown so closely together and in the impairment of ventilation. Of course, it is manifest that where the members of one household can converse with members of another across the intervening space between their homes, without the inconvenience of raising their voices or putting their hands behind their ears, an impression of the absence of privacy is obtained that is only less forcible than that which follows the knowledge that the interior of each home is subjected to the vision of the neighboring family unless shades and blinds are constantly employed to shut out the view.

As between the absence of privacy and the intensifying of the gloom that naturally shrouds houses which are jammed together, there can be little choice. By cutting off the vision, the sunlight that faintly trickles through the crevice



between two closely constructed houses is likewise kept out. At the same time, the airshaft—poor at best—that is formed by the narrow space intervening, is deprived of opportunity to fulfill its feeble function when windows and shades are brought into use to conceal the privacy of the home from the eyes of curious neighbors.

It should, therefore, appear to the mind of the most casual observer that such conditions are not conducive to good housing in the broader sense of that term, and, further, that if the deficiency found in this situation were to be limited to these disadvantages alone, it would be worth the while of people to consider how matters could be remedied and to take precautions against the ramification of the careless methods to greater areas of the town.

The evils of house congestion, however, do not end with the crowding together laterally of residences. Once the plan of choking a lot horizontally is adopted, either through deliberate purpose to make money, through negligence of definite principles of housing, or through contemning them, congestion soon ceases to be confined to the lateral extent of the houses, but creeps around to the rear of the premises and makes of the back yard, not the wide expanse of ground to delight the children of the home for which it should be intended, but a constricted area for the accommodation of as many small rent houses as its dimensions will permit.

In reality, this is the worst example of house congestion that Galveston affords. Privacy is unknown among families who occupy rear tenements. Sanitation is a word that carries with it little signification. There is no room to fulfill the ordinary purposes to which a back yard is put. The house that fronts on the street is deprived of its natural right to a yard. The house that fronts on the alley has never had reasonable expectation of having a yard and is content to be crowded between the rear steps of the big house and the stable that goes with it.

### **BACK YARDS ARE CONGESTED.**

There are innumerable instances of back yard crowding in Galveston. Time and again the writer has seen a row of houses fronting a more or less fashionable street that were backed up to the rear ends of a row of shanties fronting a more or less disreputable alley. An effort at division of the intervening yards had been made by the construction of a fence which eventually became the dismembered relic of a one-time laudable purpose, or had degenerated into the dead-line that separated the belligerent scions of the lowly from their instinctive enemies, the Lord Fauntleroy of the Upper Ten.

Sanitation is at a premium under conditions that follow this sort of arrangement of dwellings. A great many of the smaller houses of Galveston are without sewerage connections. Sometimes they are remote from the sewer mains and can not be connected. Other times they are near the mains, but the landlord or the property owner, whosoever he may be, has either failed or refused to make the connection that the law requires. The big house, fronting on the street, is therefore subjected to the annoyance of outhouses in its very back yard. The closets are away from public vision and often are allowed to accumulate quantities of fecal waste that befoul the air of the whole premises if they do not threaten the health of the immediate community.

Cut up into small areas, the back yard of a house becomes the concentrating point of the trash of the rear tenement as well as that of the big house. Even the distribution of dirt sometimes becomes a palliating influence. It is devoid

at least of the repulsiveness of concentration. The more corners in a back yard the more congregating points of filth there are, and the jamming together of rear ends of dwellings, separated only by narrow strips of ground divided by makeshift fences, provides excellent facilities for the accumulation of dirt that often defies the most energetic efforts to remove.

The small premises fronting the alleys usually have as an important part of their complement a cow or two, a horse, a donkey or a pack of dogs. Frequently one sees a miniature back yard, struggling for a legitimate title to that designation between a rear tenement and a large house facing the street, occupied by cattle. It must be remembered that the lots are but 120 feet in depth, and that the large house and the small one, if they be houses at all, must aggregate in length at least 100 feet. The area left for yard purposes of both dwellings consists, therefore, of but a bare twenty feet in depth, and when this is shared by a horse or a cow or a goat on the one side and a small boy playing marbles on the other, it's odds on the former to hold the fort. And that small boy proposition is not of inconsiderable value. The back yard belongs to him. It's his playground and he suffers correspondingly, experience proves, to his lack of it. Parents are not disposed to permit their children to run the streets. Out there they can not control the boy's associations. But what are they to do when the back yard hardly affords room to turn around in, or is simply an uninviting annex to a cow stable?

### A THOUGHT FOR THE BOY.

"That b'y is a curious youngsther," said a pleasant-faced Irish washerwoman whom the writer met in Galveston the other day, designating a little fellow of some eight summers who was trotting down the street with a tin tucket in his hand. "The yar-r-rd is shmall and the drainage ain't good and the pore little divil gits rheumatiz playin' 'round. But the funny thing is that the rheumatiz leaves him whin he hits the sthreet. An' I can't find it in me hear-r-rt to keep him in the yar-r-r-rd. It's no place for a b'y anyway."

This industrious soul lived in a house that was backed up against a row of shanties. The ordinary space of ground that should be allotted to one house not only had to serve the purpose for two dwellings, but it had to accommodate extensions of both houses, provide room for two closets and afford stable room for a couple of flea-bitten mules. The unsightly mess in the mule lot was hardly more insufferable to the eye than the mixture of dish and rainwater in the back yard of the house of the washerwoman. And she was doing her best to relieve the evil condition when the writer encountered her. Her rough skirt was pinned up and with broom and pail she was making a vigorous fight against the wet grounds so her little grandson could have a "place fer ter play mar-r-rbles whin the sun comes out and dhries the yar-r-rd." Lack of sewerage compelled her to empty her dishpans in the yard. There was no other place for the waste to go. And when Jupiter Pluvius complicated her work "the little divil" had to take to the street until his grandmother could get the back yard into a condition not inimical to his health.

Investigation of this condition will prove intensely interesting. In many areas in Galveston conditions in the rear of first-class dwellings are as badly congested as they are in front, with the difference that the front part of the premises is usually neat and clean whereas the rear is not as a rule above reproach from a sanitary viewpoint.

A panoramic view of some blocks of the city would give the impression of a

large-size rabbit warren—big houses in front, jammed together so closely that passage between them is impossible, disputing, as it were, inch by inch the encroachment of the little huts and cottages in the rear, but suffering the constant humiliation of defeat.

There are often, it is said, more persons living in houses facing the alley than there are living in the dwellings behind them, facing the street.

The houses are so closely crowded that privacy is an unknown element of home life and adequate sanitation is merely a Utopian conception.

The people, thus hemmed in, can not be clean and it does not require many failures to convince them of this and to render them indisposed to try.

---

## **GALVESTON'S HIGH COTTAGE FORMS PART OF CITY'S HOUSING PROBLEM**

(From Issue of Nov. 30.)

Meeting the exigencies of grade-raising has given rise in Galveston to a type of architecture peculiar to that city—the high cottage—which is sure to attract early the attention of the visitor. Extension of the plan, formulated originally in necessity, then elaborated for the convenience of the household with respect to more spacious accommodations, has given many parts of the city a stilted appearance. The prominent architectural lines of the structural city are perpendicular and noticeably elongated, depriving the appearance of the whole of that physical beauty which comes from lateral expansion of building schemes.

When the elevation of the grade of the low areas of the island was undertaken it became necessary to raise the dwellings to permit the work of filling to go on around them. The people soon ascertained that there was little difference in the cost of raising their houses two feet and five feet. The chief expense of the undertaking was met when the structures were lifted from their foundations. It was but a matter of defraying a small additional cost for more lumber to provide large surface cellars beneath the first floors of the houses, which would give adequate room for all storage purposes in need of which the occupants might be. Consequently, the houses were lifted several feet above the new grade line and the nether spaces inclosed by clapboards, making basement rooms co-extensive in surface with the original foundation areas. Thus arose the high cottage of Galveston.

As building continued and house owners had opportunity to observe the successful working of this plan of acquiring for housing purposes the maximum room which a lot afforded, the idea of the high cottage obtained wider vogue and became the type of dwelling selected by persons who desired to invest \$500 to \$2,000 in homes or rental property. The result has been that Galveston is choked with high cottages. Throughout the residence districts of the city one sees them. They are crowded into small areas that do not provide room for yards. In many instances they have been erected so close to the sidewalk line that the construction of stairways of sufficient length to reach the first floor of the dwelling has imposed the necessity of building the steps oblique to the front of the house instead of at right angles to it as is the custom elsewhere with respect to the construction of small dwellings. The porches are small as a rule and seldom afford more space than would be required for two or three chairs. A small plot of ground may afford opportunity for the cultivation of a miniature

flower garden in front of the house and under the steps, but it would be overcrowded by the congregation of half a dozen children for a game of mumble-peg or jack-stones. There is no place for romping—not even for marbles played in a big ring.

The rear of the tenant cottages of this type presents no fairer prospect for yard space. Long flights of steps reach to the ground and clothes lines clutter the air space. Sheds and outhouses occupy considerable territory, the rest of which, in many instances, is kept for a long time in dampness by inadequate drainage. The rear of houses fronting on the alley prevent frequently the extension of the yards to proper lengths.

### PURPOSES OF SUCH INCLOSURES.

The inclosed areas beneath the high cottages are used for a multiplicity of purposes. Generally household goods and fuel are stored there, as they find a place secure from inclement weather. Many of them have been converted into washrooms where the weekly task of laundering is performed. Some of them are floored, others are not. Frequently windows have been cut in the boarding, giving light, ventilation and sunshine necessary to better sanitation. Not infrequently, however, and perhaps in the more numerous cases, these inclosures are dark and without ventilation save that which comes through the doors and cracks in the woodwork.

The writer has seen these inclosures serving the purpose of stables for horses and cows.

Some of them were clean stables; others were not. And in connection with that discovery the question suggested itself: Does good housing contemplate a stable as a foundation for a home, be it thoroughly cleaned daily and maintained in a condition that, for a stable, would be termed sanitary? It would doubtless occur to any one that daily cleaning of a stable would preclude deleterious consequences that would naturally be expected to follow such a condition of housing. But the writer saw conditions surrounding this phase of the housing problem in Galveston that appeared to him not to have been relieved in several days or, perhaps, a week. At his approach flies swarmed helter-skelter from their quiet nesting and feeding in the filth in which they breed and thrive.

The city health department assured the writer that conditions of this kind did not give it undue trouble. Where complaint is made, occupants of the premises are compelled to clean up in accordance with the city's regulations. Inspectors of the department are vigilant and do what they can to prevent the accumulation of dirt and filth, but they are not always able to accomplish in its entirety that which should be done to maintain such stables in conditions conforming to the well-known rules of sanitation. However, eliminating the consideration of sanitation, and assuming that stables of this kind are kept free of accumulated filth and fecal matter, it was frequently admitted to the writer that the practice of keeping stock beneath the living rooms of families does not comport with the well-grounded principles of good and adequate housing.

Not all the houses that have been elevated high above the ground have had their under-spaces inclosed. Open spaces are found beneath many of them, the stilts upon which they rest being clearly exposed to view. The ground under the floor is not infrequently clean, but of the instances noted by the writer the majority showed a practice on the part of the occupants to sweep the dirt of the

premises under the house. They thereby got it out of the way and out of sight. But it, nevertheless, remained.

The relative value of the merits and demerits of the high cottage is largely a matter of opinion. In Galveston it has its advocates as well as its opponents.

---

## HOME OWNERSHIP COMMON AMONG GALVESTON'S LABORING POPULATION

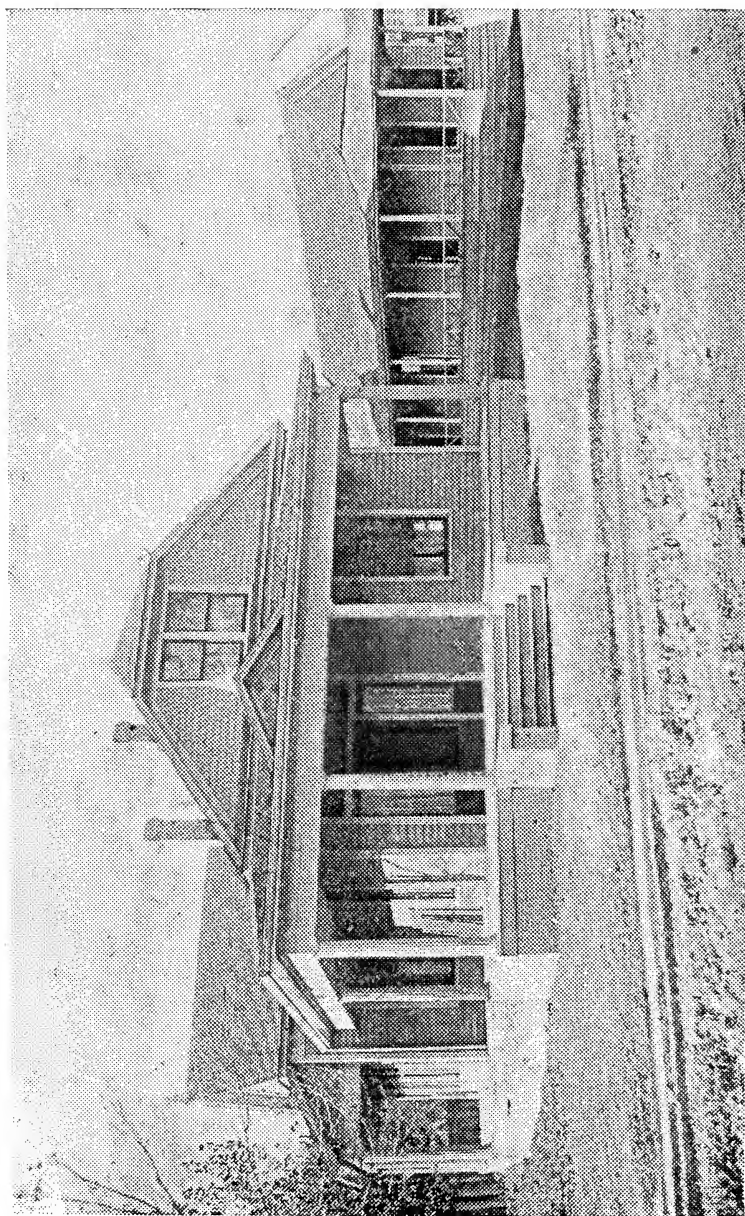
(From Issue of Dec. 1.)

Galveston is fortunate in a comparative lack of poverty. Of the laboring people, the majority find employment on the docks and receive wages that are adequate not only to the needs of life, but are sufficient to provide the nucleus of a savings account that eventually develops into a sum large enough to make the possession of a home possible.

Work along the docks does not maintain a constant level. It fluctuates with the seasons, and at times each year the dock-worker is without employment or is forced to accept much less compensation than the \$4, \$5 or even \$8 a day which he has opportunity to earn while shipping is at its height. The good wives of the longshoremen and stevedores are not unmindful of this condition, and in the time of plenty they prepare for the period of less affluence which they know will follow. They are as a class frugal, thrifty women and take care of their homes with diligent pride. They have as a rule mastered the economy of the home and have assisted their husbands to put by for hard times or investment definite portions of their annual incomes. The result has been, according to dependable information, that the majority of Galveston's laboring element is composed of home-owners. And were it not for deficiencies in building plans that have already been pointed out, and others which will subsequently be shown, Galveston would be largely in a class by itself with respect to the working out of an ideal housing scheme.

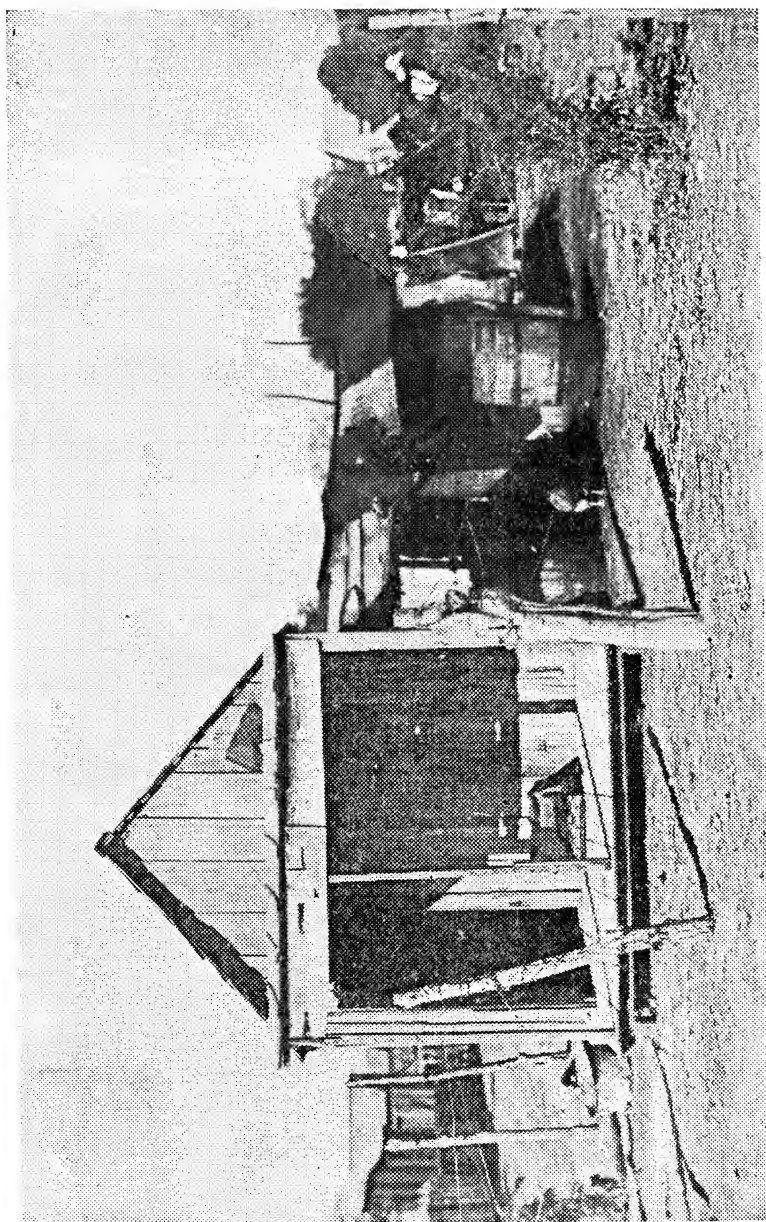
This fact suggests the thought that there is little overcrowding of tenants in the homes of the working people. And this is true. For the most part the homes are occupied by the members of one family, except during the period when shipping is at its height and itinerant laborers come into the port to obtain temporary work along the wharves. Then home-owners begin to take in boarders, and not infrequently do they crowd their families into spaces too small to be occupied collectively in comfort. Houses ranging in size from three to five rooms, occupied ordinarily by families of five to ten persons, are sometimes made to bear the burden of additional boarders and lodgers during the busy season. But this is not the rule among the working people, it is learned, the year 'round. The negroes, of course, supply the exceptions. They crowd into their houses without regard for sanitation, ventilation or decency. But among the white laborers in Galveston "the lodger evil" has not intruded itself offensively.

The city has done a great deal for its people, and that which it now lacks in provisions for their proper care is largely contemplated in the plan of general improvement to which the authorities are adhering, but which will require time to work out thoroughly and successfully.



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

### LIMITATIONS OF SEWER SYSTEM.

For an example, the sewerage system is not coextensive with the area of the city. This is a deficiency that is not at all peculiar to Galveston. It is common to cities of Texas that have not had the obstacles to overcome that have appeared at times to all but determined, courageous, unrelaxing Galvestonians to be insurmountable. But as quickly as the work can be done the system of sewerage will be extended so as to provide accommodations for all houses within the limits of the city.

The surface of parts of the city is too low to supply the necessary incline for draining the sewer mains into the Gulf. Money is needed to raise the grade, as it is an expensive undertaking. As soon as these portions can be filled, the sewers will be extended to parts of the city that are now without them. At the same time the Health Department has tentative plans concerning the installment of a modern system of sewerage to operate by compressed air. At present, however, this is in contemplation only.

Limitations of the sewerage system necessarily have given rise to a large number of surface closets throughout the unsupplied area. Sanitary inspectors endeavor to prevent accumulations of waste that would become pernicious agencies in a community, but this is a task in the performance of which perfection has not yet been attained. Where complaints are made they are speedily attended to, but the corps of inspectors is probably not large enough to bring about a constant standard of cleanliness among outhouses of this kind. Altogether, the unsanitary and unhealthful were frequently seen throughout the unsewered area.

More minute inspection by a larger force of inspectors would probably effect an immediately noticeable change in conditions surrounding Galveston houses that have lacked a good deal of being clean. It is unquestionably a difficult matter to prevent surface closets from becoming unsanitary, and the most rigorous inspection must be constantly applied to keep situations from passing beyond control. During the summer seven inspectors are employed, but with the coming of winter that number is reduced to two. They are manifestly handicapped in their work by a task too large for them to accomplish.

In the same light must the accumulations of trash in yards and around residences be viewed. For the purpose of keeping the city clean, the Commissioners have imposed upon its own expense account the cost of hauling away and destroying the garbage. All that is required of citizens is to collect the trash of their premises into piles or boxes, which are removed regularly by the city's street forces. This is done without cost to the occupants of the house, although they are required to pay a nominal sum for the privilege of sewer connections. During the visit of the writer to Galveston the city was at work upon a modern incinerator in which the refuse of the town is to be destroyed.

### UNATTRACTIVE BACK YARDS ARE SEEN.

However, there are a great many houses in Galveston whose occupants evidently do not avail themselves of the city's liberality in regard to the disposition of trash and garbage. Dirty back yards are not at all uncommon. Trash and filth of all kinds are allowed to collect in many yards the writer inspected, which, together with poor drainage and the consequent standing of dishwater, soapsuds and puddles formed by late rains, made of certain premises—many of them, in fact—veritable eyesores to the observer with a sanitary bent.

Galveston has one characteristic that few other cities in Texas, if any, can boast. There are very few houses used as dwellings that are without running water within their walls. The hydrant in the yard is virtually unknown in Galveston as the source of supply for the water of the home.

However, on the other hand, it is a city that requires adequate screening, and this it does not have. The salt moisture with which the air is impregnated rapidly rusts out most of the screens other than copper-made, and makes this means of protection against flies and mosquitoes more expensive than it is in inland territory. Very few indeed of the houses occupied by working people, particularly the rent houses, seen by the writer, were adequately screened.

Correction of this deficiency will probably come with wider education of property owners to the needs of tenants and a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to a community to be properly housed.

## HOUSES OF GALVESTON EVIDENCE NEED OF MORE ENDURING COATS OF PAINT

(From Issue of Dec. 2.)

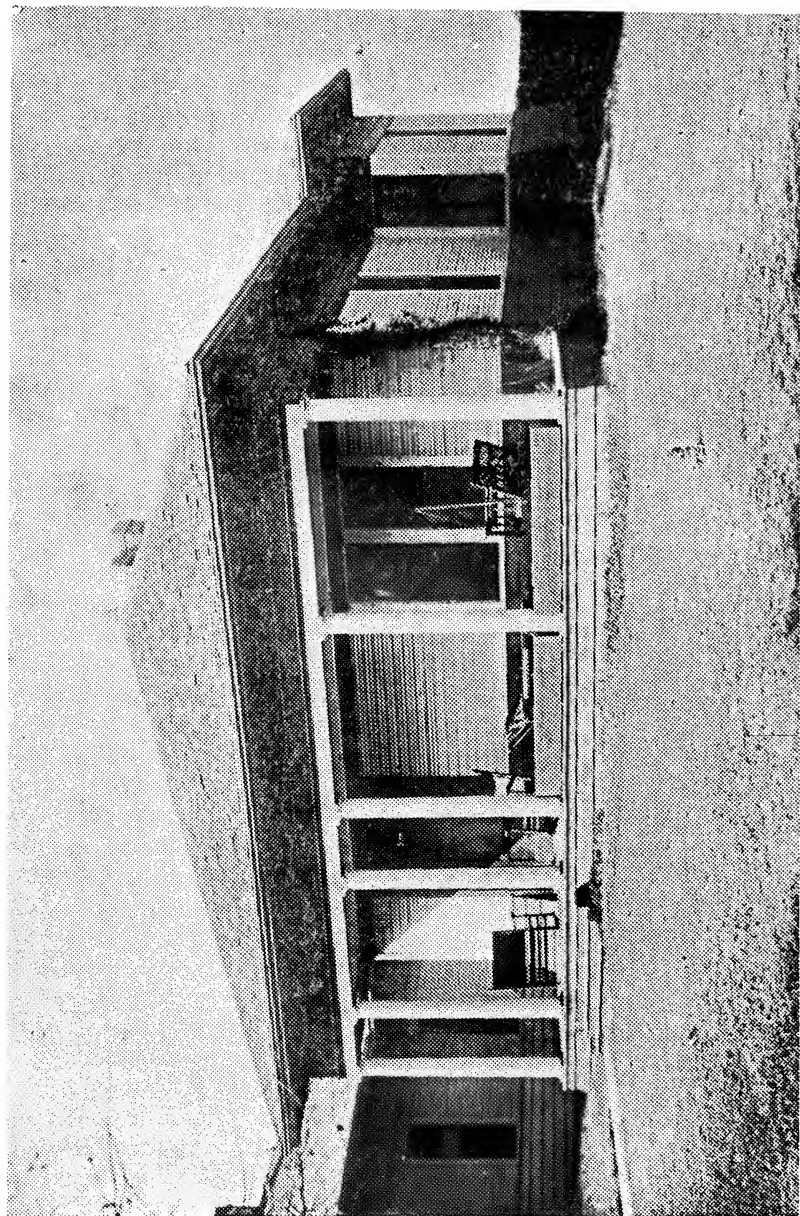
More than any other conspicuous city in Texas, Galveston needs painting. The first-time visitor to the seaport is struck by a dull aspect of things physical which often reacts prejudicially upon him and engenders criticisms of the town that are not borne out in truth. Colorless planks, or lumber that has lost its chromatic embellishments, are not suggestive of brightness within, nor do they reflect an encouraging light around them.

In their original coatings, houses, of Galveston have presented most of the colors of the spectrum. The taste of the people who have had the means to build more or less pretentious houses has largely run to bright colors, such as yellow and red, although the old-fashioned and ever-popular white is also a favorite. Among the smaller houses, white paint predominates, or, more correctly speaking, it did. The constant action of salt, moist air has not been well withstood. The result has been that throughout the town, in the districts of the wealthy and in those sections that are inhabited chiefly by laboring people, the houses as a rule present a bedraggled appearance due to the lack of paint.

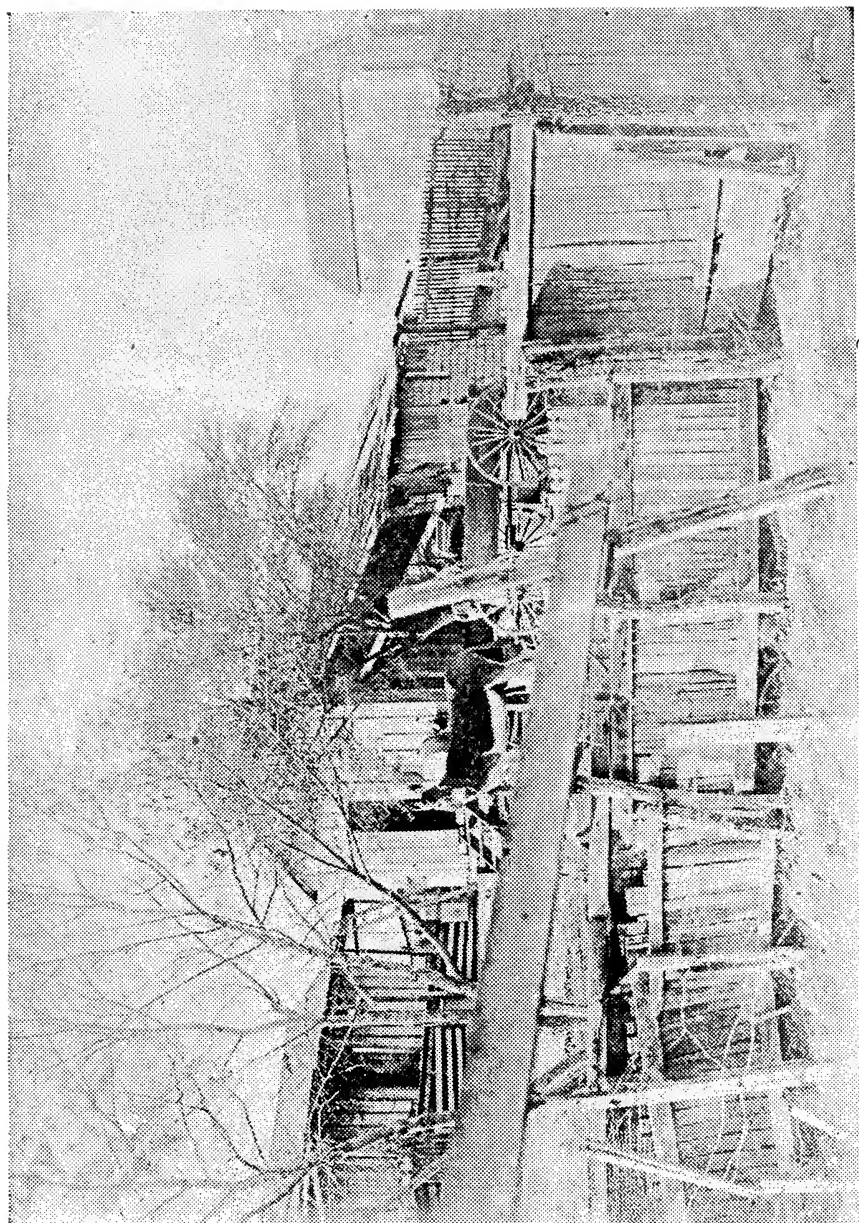
The dampness of the atmosphere, however, according to Mr. I. H. Kempner, a member of the Board of City Commissioners, is not the exclusive cause of the rapid disintegration, or wearing away of painted surfaces. The cause frequently is found in the paint itself, although, of course, whatever inherent defect the composition may have, more readily manifests itself under the erosive effect of the salt moisture in the air. The practice has long been followed in Galveston, it is said, of calling for bids on the painting of houses, and as a rule the cheapest proposition is accepted. It has apparently happened that the cheaper the contract the cheaper and less enduring the paint. Where the best paints have been used, said Mr. Kempner, they have been found to last well, and consequently have precluded for a long time the coming of that half-washed appearance that many houses in the city present.

On account of this appearance of dissolving paint, coupled with inferior drainage which parts of the island afford, Galveston for several days after a rain is shown at its worst. But the impression should not be gained that it is a dirty city. On the contrary, it is comparatively clean. Its sandy soil does not produce the mud nuisance and the streets and sidewalks disclose the constant attention of local authorities to their upkeep.

Among all stations of society, some of the prettiest homes in Texas are found in Galveston. Flower gardens and lawns surrounding the mansions of the wealthy are no more complete when gauged by their grander scale than are those that provide the settings for the little homes of those people in modest circumstances who understand the idea of a home and have bent their endeavors toward achieving it in the abiding places of their families. The mild climate—almost perennial summer—of the island makes possible the cultivation of luxuriant plants and flowers whose blooms delight the eye and fill the air with fragrance. The writer passed dozens and dozens of little homes, ranging in cost from \$1,000 to \$3,000, that bore in their outward aspect of comfort and beauty indisputable testimony to the inward good taste and contentment that give the atmosphere and environment of the cottage some of the charm of the palace. Ownership of a home carries with it not only the stimulus of pride in possession,



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

but the greater encouragement and satisfaction that come with the sense of being settled—an anchor to windward along whose unyielding cable the forces of confidence and determination are electrified into definite influences upon life. Where the family owns its home the principles of good housing usually govern in its construction, equipment, economy and occupancy. There are bathtubs, ventilation and sanitation, and there is not as a rule filth nor overcrowding. It is learned upon dependable authority that there are very few houses in Galveston, comparatively speaking, that are not equipped with bathtubs.

The demand for houses in Galveston—which reveals the city's advancement—has raised rentals to a pretty high level in comparison with standards that prevail with respect to workingmen's dwellings in other cities of its size. Rentals on this character of house will range from \$8 to \$16 a month, the average, according to dependable information, being some figure between \$10 and \$16. Houses of the kind may be erected on a scale of expense ranging from \$500 to \$1,500, convenience to town, desirability of location and other elements besides the cost of construction, entering into the rental factor. But while rents are apparently high, the situation adjusts itself in the general competency of the working people as wage-earners. It has been previously pointed out that Galveston is largely barren of poor people. There are few vacant houses. The laborer is able to pay the rent that is charged and does so without complaint because he is well provided with means. The mean wealth of the town in comparison to that of others of its size and activities would probably be found to measure to a very high standard. And, of course, the general affluence of a city minimizes proportionately its housing problems.

## **SAN ANTONIO'S HOUSING PROBLEM CONCERNS THE POORER MEXICANS**

(From Issue of Dec. 3.)

In its housing problem, as in many things, San Antonio is thoroughly unique. The elements of contrasts, of antithetical extremes, are rarely revealed more prominently than they are shown in its manner of sheltering its people. Of housing conditions found to surround the unskilled working people of the conspicuous Texas cities, those of San Antonio are unquestionably at once the best and the worst. They are best in the almost universal practice among the more competent of the American working people of owning their own homes or residing singly in families in individual rent houses. They are worst in the extremity of overcrowding to which a large percentage of the Mexican population is subjected.

The chief housing question of San Antonio for a long time has been: What is to be done with the Mexican population? At times efforts have been made to solve it satisfactorily, but none of them has attained ripe success, although there are at present in process of evolution a number of laudable enterprises looking to the solution of the problem.

It can not be said, however, that San Antonio has devoted much attention to the housing of its Mexican inhabitants. They have been more or less regarded as Nomadic tribes, coming and going at will, to whom local habitations were of no consequence other than to provide protection against occasional rain and supply a temporary hearthstone for the preparation of tortillos and beans.



The American population has worked out its own salvation. Subscribing to different principles of life and imbued with a more electric energy, it built its own homes, furnished its own houses and lived its own life of industry and amusement. The Mexicans, perhaps, were expected to do the same. And yet more than one-fifth of the entire population of the city of San Antonio consists of Mexican people.

It must be understood in the beginning that not all the Mexicans of San Antonio belong to what is called the laboring contingent. There are many affluent citizens of Mexican blood who have cast their lots with the development of the Southwest, and in the field of merchandise, in the higher trades, in professional life the educated, active, intelligent Mexican competes shoulder to shoulder and successfully with his American brother.

It is not these Mexicans who have suffered from neglect by San Antonio. Like the Americans, they have taken care of themselves, made their own ways in the world and built their own homes to the satisfaction of their tastes and desires. They are important integers in San Antonio's economic and political life. It is rather the lowlier element that supplies the sociological problem—the wage-makers whose earning power is limited by capacity or circumstance to \$6, \$8 or \$10 a week.

Of these there are many in San Antonio. It is they who lend verisimilitude to the Spanish cast of the town, as they shamle along the streets in bright zapares and tall sombreros, vending their wares to the curious tourist. It is they who work the city's streets or walk them in search of odd jobs here and there at \$1.25 a day. It is they, with their constant rivals and instinctive enemies, the negroes, who chiefly make up San Antonio's laboring people. And it is they who are housed under conditions equaling if not surpassing the congestion of New York tenements, with the single conspicuous difference that in San Antonio's Mexican corrals the overcrowding extends laterally and in New York it seeks relief in structure upon structure perpendicularly.

These corrals are among the showplaces of the city. Not that San Antonio is proud of them, for it is not, and frequently there have been started movements to do away with them; but they are the scenes that the tourist of the North wants to see and he seeks them out. Amazed, perhaps, at their squalor, and dumfounded at the manifest contentment of the occupants under conditions revolting to the eye and the nostril, he nevertheless carries away an impression of their picturesqueness and a remembrance of their suggestion of old Mexico. They are picturesque, but only in that they are unusual. That they suggest the life of peons of the Republic to the South, and are, perhaps, an improvement upon it, those who are competent to judge have no doubt. It is certain that one who finds himself in the midst of them momentarily wonders if he be, after all, in the United States of America.

Bent on exploration and eager to see anything interesting and new the city affords, the visitor jumps into an automobile on a crisp, sunny morning when San Antonio, the beautiful, is at its best, and whirling through thoroughfares cleaved between long rows of buildings of metropolitan aspect and size, comes in a few minutes' drive to a gateway to what he first believes to be a wagon-yard, typical of Texas towns. Alighting from his car he passes through the opening and finds himself within a rectangular inclosure resembling more than anything else that suggests itself to his mind the interior of a western fort, showing the rear view of the barracks. The building is low and long, extending fully one

hundred yards from the gate. A low gallery, covered by a roof whose eaves can be touched by the fingers of a tall man, girdles the building like a belt. At intervals of about nine or ten feet are doors—entrances to the living stalls of families. Above the roof of the gallery ventilators that open outward on hinges break the dark continuity of the upper wall and lend a bit of grotesque irregularity to a building scheme whose conspicuous characteristic is its solemn plainness.

The visitor steps to the gallery and looks through one of the doors. Dirt and disorder are in supreme control. He enters a nine or ten-foot room. To the left is a bunk, heaped with soiled and ragged coverings. To the right are the patched-up remnants of an antiquated bed in similar disarray. In one of the corners of the room are found the heaped-up components of a pallet. Guitars and mandolins adorn the wall, with here and there a Mexican flag, a picture of Benito Juarez or a crucifix. The spiders and the flies, during the intermittent pauses in their aggressions one upon the other, engage in ceaseless rivalry in mural decorations.

Passing through to the rear room, the eye of the visitor notes at a glance the sloping of the roof downward to meet the lower back wall of the house. Shingles only protect the room space from the weather. A small cook stove, in a bad state of repair, is filling the room with the pungent aroma of burning mesquite limbs, as upon it boils merrily a can of frijoles, or Mexican beans. A table, from the surface of which one may scrape with his finger nail, or preferably the ferrule of his cane, paraffin-like cakes of grease and grime; a chair or two, a wood box, a worn-out broom and kitchen utensils of various kinds complete the scene. It's a cold morning. Behind the stove a hairless dog is dozing. He only opens his eyes half-way to note the intrusion, then goes back to sleep. He, too, is Mexican.

Returning to the front room the visitor perceives a ladder. Above it is a square opening cut in the ceiling—if ceiling it be—of the sleeping room. Pursuing his way up the ladder he finds himself in a loft, covered with bedding. He then appreciates the function of the ventilators, the odd appearance of which struck his eye when he entered the premises. He hurries back, after a rapid survey of the room, to the aperture through which he descends to the fresher air below, grateful for the opportunity to catch his breath again.

Stall after stall is visited. There are more than fifty of them. All were found in virtually the same condition of uncleanness. All gave evidence of occupancy by more persons than they could comfortably accommodate. All rented for 90c a week, except those in which the landlord provided the stove. And they? One dollar and a quarter a week!

Some of them are always occupied. All are sometimes occupied. Frequently several hundred persons are found living in the entire corral. The landlord had never counted them. He didn't know how many tenants he had. His dealings were with one member of a family or with an individual who wanted lodging. Sometimes there were a hundred. Sometimes there were more. Cotton-picking time always reduces his population. And it was cotton-picking time then. At least all the laborers of the field had not returned to the city from the country. Soon as frost comes business will pick up. The landlord was kept busy counting his money. No time to count the people. A good investment? Why, it's the best in the world. This thing gets \$250 a month! But it's hard money. It has to be watched like a hawk. It's hard to make them pay. When white people come in they cause trouble. They know the law. Sometimes they stay in bed

and refuse to pay the rent. But the Mexicans can be bluffed. That's the only way to handle 'em. Bluff 'em! This fist got hurt the other day in putting a bluff across. But it worked. The rent was paid.

And there you are.

The public is doubtless interested in the sanitary equipment supplied by these quarters. More than half a hundred families can find sleeping places—such as they are—in the corral. There were less than one dozen closets for the use of the entire community. They were built side-by-side in groups of two, and were of the ordinary flushing type, built after a crude and sturdy pattern to withstand the wear and tear of careless treatment. None of the sinks was found to be clean. Half a dozen hydrants in the yard supplied the water for all purposes.

Children shared the yard with horses and burros. The latter as well as the former roamed at will over the premises, seeking a wisp of hay or a grain of corn that had escaped previous gleanings. The smaller children rolled and tumbled in the soft dirt which the slothful hoofs of the donkeys had pulverized by constant treading.

Carrying a graphic mental picture of big problems in the concrete, the stranger walks out of the corral, mingles with the busy commercial traffic of the street for a moment, re-enters his automobile and is whisked away to the Franciscan missions, older by hundreds of years, but not as dilapidated nor "run down at the heel" as the habitations he has just left.

---

## **SAN ANTONIO CORRALS ARE CALLED, BY SOME, GILT-EDGED INVESTMENTS**

(From Issue of Dec. 4.)

There are about twenty corrals in San Antonio, given over chiefly to the shelter of Mexicans. All do not present the same vicious features, but there is no dissimilarity in the evil that comes from their use as multiple houses. While most of them have been built of wood and are more or less flimsy affairs at best, there are notable instances where brick and even concrete have been used in their construction.

The more substantial structures are, of course, the best the city provides. They have as a rule a larger supply of household and sanitary conveniences than the inferior structures are equipped with and, renting for more money, have drawn to them a more industrious and a more competent class of tenants. They are for the most part, however, hidden from the street, and provide the habitat of little colonies of people too numerous to be housed comfortably or even decently in the limited space allowed.

There are large corrals and small ones, ranging in capacity from a dozen or two compartments or stalls to more than one hundred. Some of them consist of large houses strung out for many feet in unbroken continuity with but thin board partitions between them. The others are composed of small rooms, affording but a moiety of light and ventilation and not much space for the turning around of many people.

As the landlord views them, these corrals are "gilt-edged" investments. They are kept up at trivial expense. The Mexican and the poorer white people whom necessity sometimes drives to refuge in them, are not sticklers for looks. Nor do they mind sharing with the rest of the community the meager water and sanitary facilities which the premises afford. They are held under tight curb by the landlord, who watches his property with tireless eyes, and are prevented by his diligent surveillance from injuring the property more than natural laws of deterioration under constant usage would excuse. The property is not often left exclusively to the tenants' care. There are too many to reckon with.

One's first thought would be that conditions under which these people

live would be productive of frequent fires. But this is not the case. One landlord told the writer that in his long experience as the proprietor of a corral but one fire had occurred and that was due to the carelessness or feebleness of a sick man who was occupying one of his rooms. It is probable that the constant presence of some one on each of the individual premises is the real preventive of fire, but after viewing the scene a search for a reason will sometimes suggest Jacob Riis' story of the New York tenement house that was too well saturated with dirt and filth to offer a combustible body to the flames.

### WHAT THE CORRALS EARN.

In dollars and cents, and considered solely from the viewpoint of the owner, these institutions are undoubtedly gilt-edged investments. They are money-makers—for the owners. But for the city and for society they are about the most uneconomical means of housing that could be provided. They breed an undesirable element of society, they increase the police expense of the city, they make the community more susceptible to the inroads of disease, and as a moral influence injurious to the general welfare, their potentiality can not be estimated. These are conclusions that are inevitable after brief study of the situation. Expensive in the long run and detrimental to the city from every viewpoint, the profitable thing to do would be to abandon them for a more decent, a more humane, a more righteous method of housing the poorer Mexicans. Until this end shall have been attained, San Antonio will continue to be menaced by the evil influence of the corral, for these people must be housed and they drift to those places that are provided for them, and rarely, as a class, concern themselves about making their own lot in life, or creating their own homes.

## SAN ANTONIO JACALS ARE CURIOUS ELEMENTS IN CITY'S HOUSING PROBLEM

(From Issue of Dec. 5.)

The corral is not the sole evidence of San Antonio's housing problem. Its accompaniment, the jacal, an Americanized adaptation of the thatched hut of Mexico, has tenaciously held its own in certain quarters of the town, despite the aggression of the sky-scraper and the modern dwelling upon its original site.

The jacal is more or less of a puzzle. Topsy, it will be remembered, "just grewed." The jacal evidently "just happened." Manifestly without excuse in a metropolitan community, it is hardly without reason or purpose, for the shelter it provides for human beings is little better than nothing, and the home it makes is no home at all.

Its color, in the original, is as variegated as Joseph's coat. The various tints of different canning factories lend an iridescent glitter to the walls as long as the labels last, but with the coming of the rain the mucilage dissolves, the paper falls off and leaves a shack of shining silver. Oxidizing under the reaction of the air and moisture, the hut soon assumes a mottled aspect, changing eventually to a deep brown, which in richness of color—but, alas, in that alone—supplies something in common with the neat, pretty little homes that sometimes surround it.

In superficial appearance it resembles some huge lamellicorn beetle that might have crawled out of the tombs of the Pharaohs after a protracted sleep that made Van Winkle's slumber nothing more than a summer dream. If architecture named its styles from bugs or animals, the jacals would surely be consigned to the scarabaeus class. In fact, down in San Antonio they call them "cockroaches." But for purposes of descriptive nomenclature there is little need of changing from the scarab to the *blatta orientalis*. A beetle or a cockroach conveys the same idea of appearance.

They are built right on the ground and are constructed of all manner of castaway materials, in which, however, the flattened-out tins of gasoline, coal oil and tomato cans predominate. They are rarely high, and should a tall man enter an average adobe of this kind he would in all probability be compelled to stoop to avoid scraping his hat against the cobwebs on the nether side of the

roof. Posts, procured either from some near by dumping ground or cut from the mesquite thickets around the town, supply the props for the structure. Where cracker boxes have been found in abundance they have been broken up into boarding for wall coverings. Where planks of no kind or sort have been available, the city's trash piles have been gleaned for cans, the tins are stretched around the fragile framework and put on like the foliated scales or wings of the cockroach, hence the name.

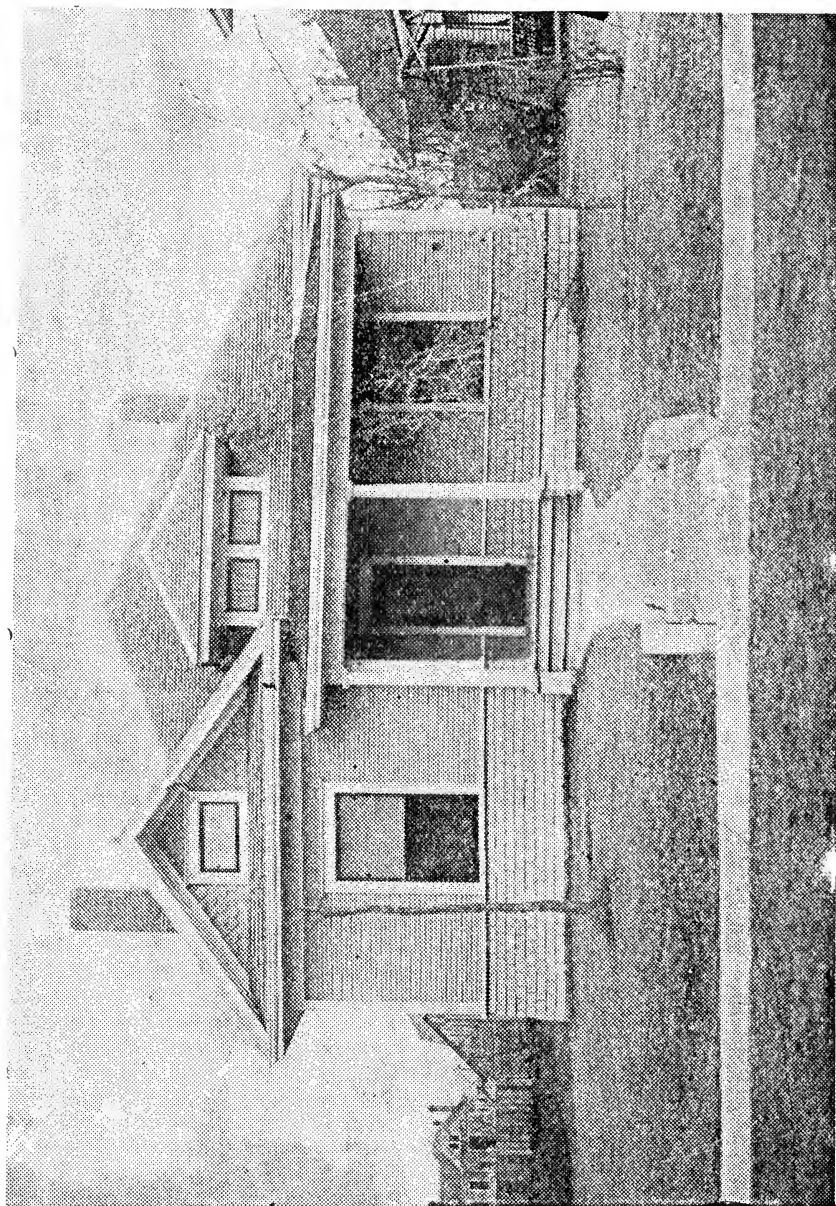
Sometimes, when the builder possesses more than ordinary knowledge of construction, he runs his roof to an apex, either in the form of a parallelogram or a cone, to provide better security against the rain. If he intends that his stove shall be indoors, he searches for abandoned pieces of stovepipe until he finds them, or, failing in that, he constructs a chimney from topless, bottomless tomato cans, old buckets or any available material that supplies the necessary cylindrical shape. There is one of these cockroach houses that is always pointed out to the visitor as a greater curiosity than the rest because of the small chimney of worn-out washtubs that have been neatly articulated into something of an ornamental design as well as to fulfill a utilitarian function.

### MANY OF THEM ARE FOUND.

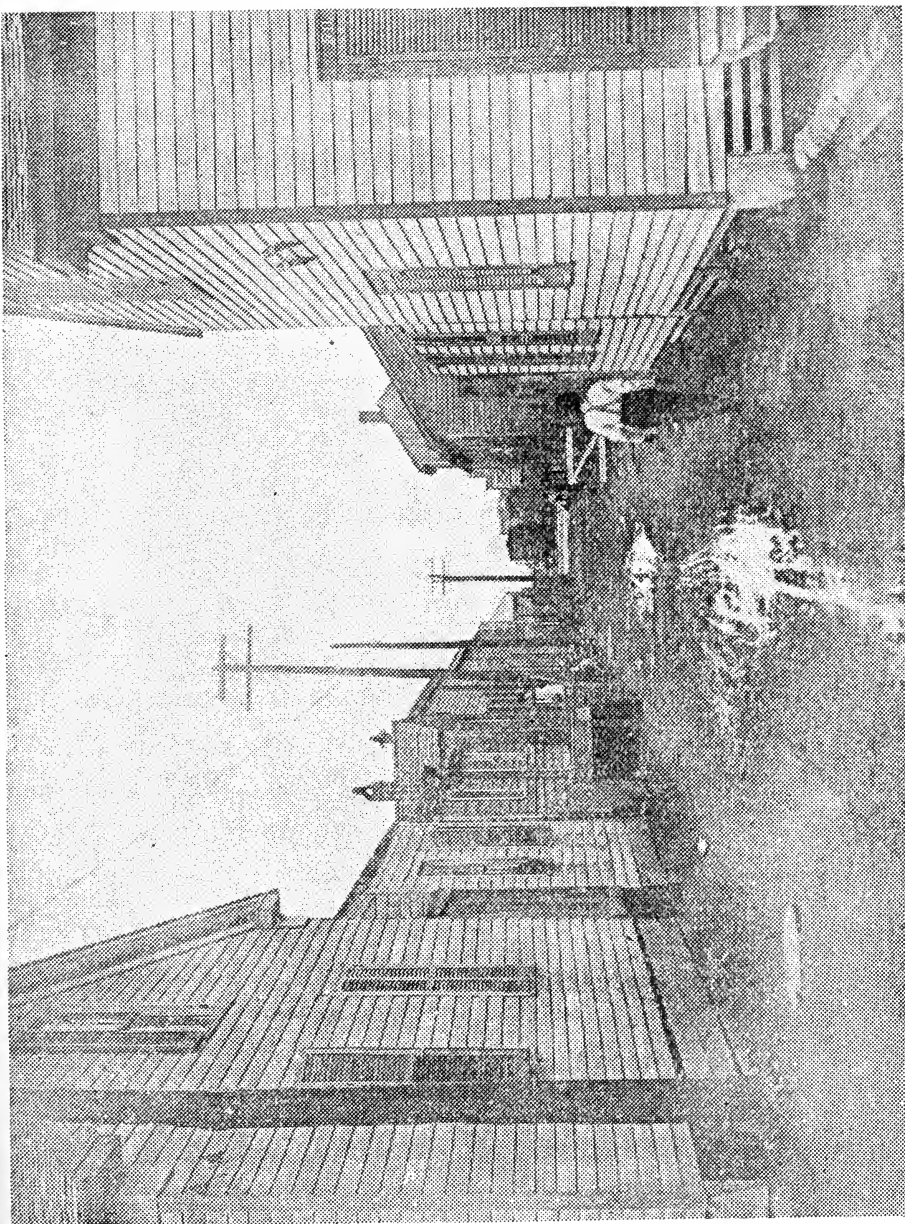
These houses are found single, in groups and in strings at various places in the Mexican settlements of San Antonio. Sometimes they consist of one room, sometimes of more. Occasionally one is noted that is of superior accommodations. Considerable time and some money, perhaps, were expended upon its construction. All told, according to dependable information, there are about two hundred of such shacks in the city, perhaps a few more. They are built upon ground that is rented for a small fee, or upon which the occupants have squatted to reside as long as they may before being ejected. In some instances occupants have bought their own lots on the basis of \$1 or \$2 down and the same amount each week until the cost price is paid, and instead of building real houses have put up huts to shelter them until better times come. Most of them are without water, the domestic supply being obtained from "water merchants" of their own race who make their daily rounds of the community, driving a sleepy burro hitched to a barrel on wheels. These merchants purchase their water from the owner of an artesian well and sell it at a pretty large profit gross. Of closets there are few, all being of the surface kind.

The premises surrounding these jacals are, as a rule, clean and well kept. It is inside that dirt and disorder reign particularly. As to cleanliness they are shown to better advantage than those of the corrals which pretend to greater excellence as homes. The Mexican's delight in flowers and vines is cherished here, while in the corrals it is neglected. Frequently one sees specimens of these little shacks almost completely covered with trailing plants, and embowered in china-berry trees planted by the builders or the early occupants. Flower beds and rose bushes often surround them, lending a piquancy to the scene that, while apparently foreign to the entire scheme of things, gives the whole a picturesqueness that is genuine and unaffected. Nature has done much for the resident of San Antonio, as every one knows who has ever dwelt or visited there, and above corrals and jacals alike stately trees outstretch their umbrageous arms in benedictions upon the heads of the lowly who reside in penury and in ignorance beneath them. Little streams ripple by in which naked and ragged children play in the high glee of innocence, while the quail call from the thickets and the mockingbirds send forth their constant carols of ecstatic melody. All, too, within the city limits of San Antonio, for the builders of the town planned generously and incorporated thirty-six square miles within the municipal domain.

And nowhere in the Mexican settlement is there evidence of race suicide. There are children everywhere. Some wear clothes, some don't. Those who are accustomed to the habiliments of civilization are in nowise disposed to lord it over their less learned brothers and sisters. They are one big family and the naked are as welcome at play as the clothed. Of course, the coming of colder weather makes garments necessary for bodily warmth, but the doubtful modesty of the Mexican does not suggest clothes for the little tots as a means of concealment of person. They are reserved for a more practical and imperative purpose.



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS,"



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."



## **SOCIETY'S INTEREST IN HOUSING SHOWN BY VOCATIONS OF THE POOR**

(From Issue of Dec. 6.)

The effect upon San Antonio and, in a measure, upon Texas, of bad housing in the Mexican settlements of that city is readily perceived through a study of habits that are necessarily formed under adverse conditions of living, and is emphasized by a little knowledge of these occupations of the people who are involuntarily subjected to them.

Human beings can with difficulty be clean and sanitary in their everyday life in a San Antonio corral. A half a dozen hydrants, located in the yard, are certainly not conducive to cleanliness among fifty or more families who have no other source of water supply. It is a long way to the water usually, and the trips with a bucket or two necessary to fill a bathtub are fatiguing and, from the viewpoint of many people, perhaps, are hardly worth the while. Besides, there are no bathtubs. Whatever bathing is done is customarily self-administered or performed by mother for child in a dishpan or some other commodious vessel the kitchen equipment may afford.

The city's system of collecting and disposing of garbage is theoretically unobjectionable, but in practical application it is faulty. The trash and garbage boxes with which corrals are provided are not cleaned with frequency sufficient to keep in a condition of minimum offensiveness the odious and unsightly accumulation of refuse which these multiple houses throw out. Kitchen drainage, there is none, except through the open door or window to the yard.

The use of one closet by ten families or more is hardly a decent nor a sanitary custom. Yet it is irremediable under prevailing conditions in many places. Its most successful collateral function, doubtless, is the dissemination of disease.

Herded together like cattle, these people necessarily are the prey of contagion once it inserts its tentacles into the fabric of their community life. What one contracts, the others catch from him. Living, too many in a room, enhances the opportunity of infection or pestilence, and intensifies the dirt. There is no relief but separation. But there is little need to exploit these things. They are self-evident truths.

Passing through a typical corral of San Antonio a visitor in the fall of the year will note here and there little piles of nutshells, and, perhaps, he will see a group of unkempt Mexicans huddled over a sack of nuts at frequent intervals along the way, deftly picking the rich, juicy kernels from the hulls. Repetition of this sight will usually provoke inquiry, upon which it is learned that a large number of the occupants of the corral and of the other institutions of the kind in the city, make their livings at that time of the year by shelling pecans for the market. The nuts are sold to them upon a stated basis, usually controlled by the market price, and they are bought back, after shelling, at a slight advance which provides the shellers' wages.

Engaged in this occupation, the Mexicans do not relieve themselves of the sordid conditions that normally surround them. They can't. They are bound to them, and when pecan shelling time comes they bring the nuts to their homes in the corrals, and sitting down amid the usual squalor of the place, proceed stolidly with their occupation. Sometimes the shelled nuts remain in little piles on the floors until ready to be resold. Sometimes there are receptacles for them. At all times it is a safe venture that the Mexican's house is just as dirty as it was the week before, and that the Mexican, himself, has made no more frequent trips to the hydrant in the yard to wash his hands than occasion required in the past.

**HAVE BECOME POPULAR DELICACY.**

Shelled pecans are becoming a popular delicacy. Most of the bars in San Antonio are equipped with catch-penny machines from which drop a handful of salted nuts when a nickel is inserted in the slot. Candies of all sorts contain the kernels of pecans as their chief ingredients. Cakes and puddings are made from them. They are used in San Antonio. They are sent throughout the State, and even, it is said, large manufacturing concerns of other States are in the market to buy them for a variety of uses.

And most of them come——. Well, it would not be accurate to say that most of them come from the hands of residents of San Antonio's corrals because the statement could not be positive in the absence of unimpeachable information. But suffice it to say that a great many of them do come from those very places—places which if once visited may have the effect of changing one's taste for a very succulent confection, if he be normally impressionable.

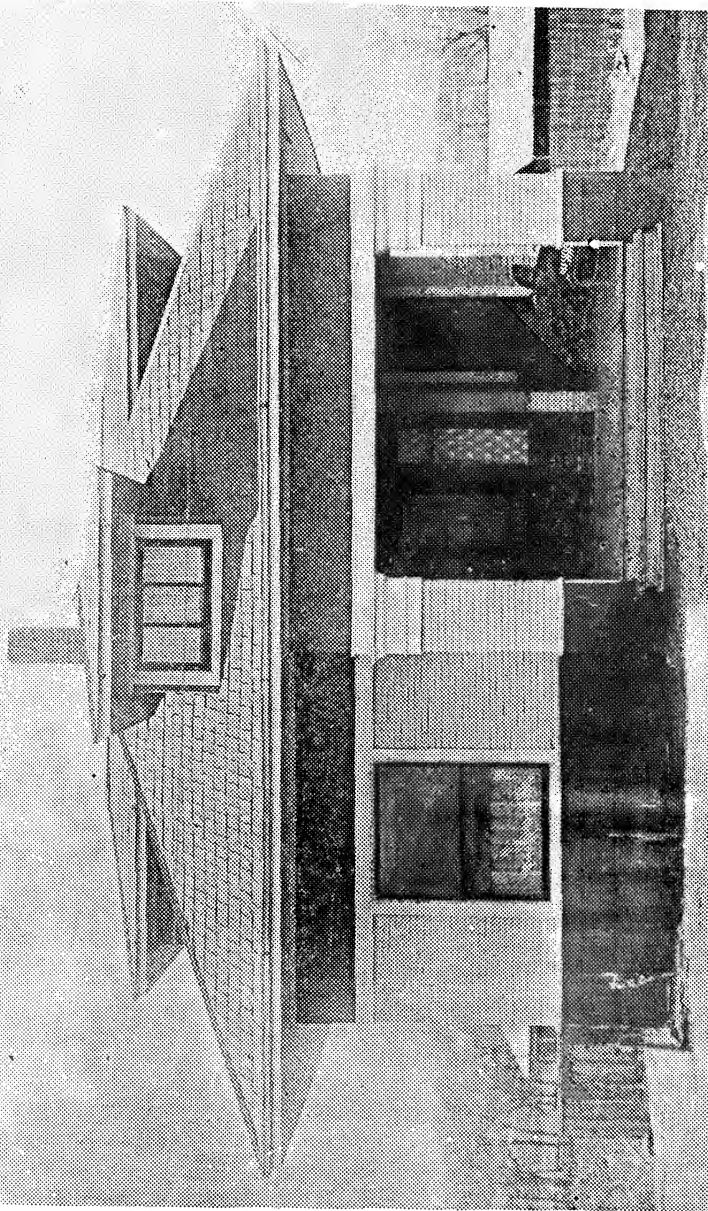
Then, there is the candy-maker. The silent vendor of San Antonio's Mexican dulce—a delicacy that is pleasing to anyone with a sweet-tooth—usually hails from a corral. If not that, then from a jacal.

And the tamale merchant, too.

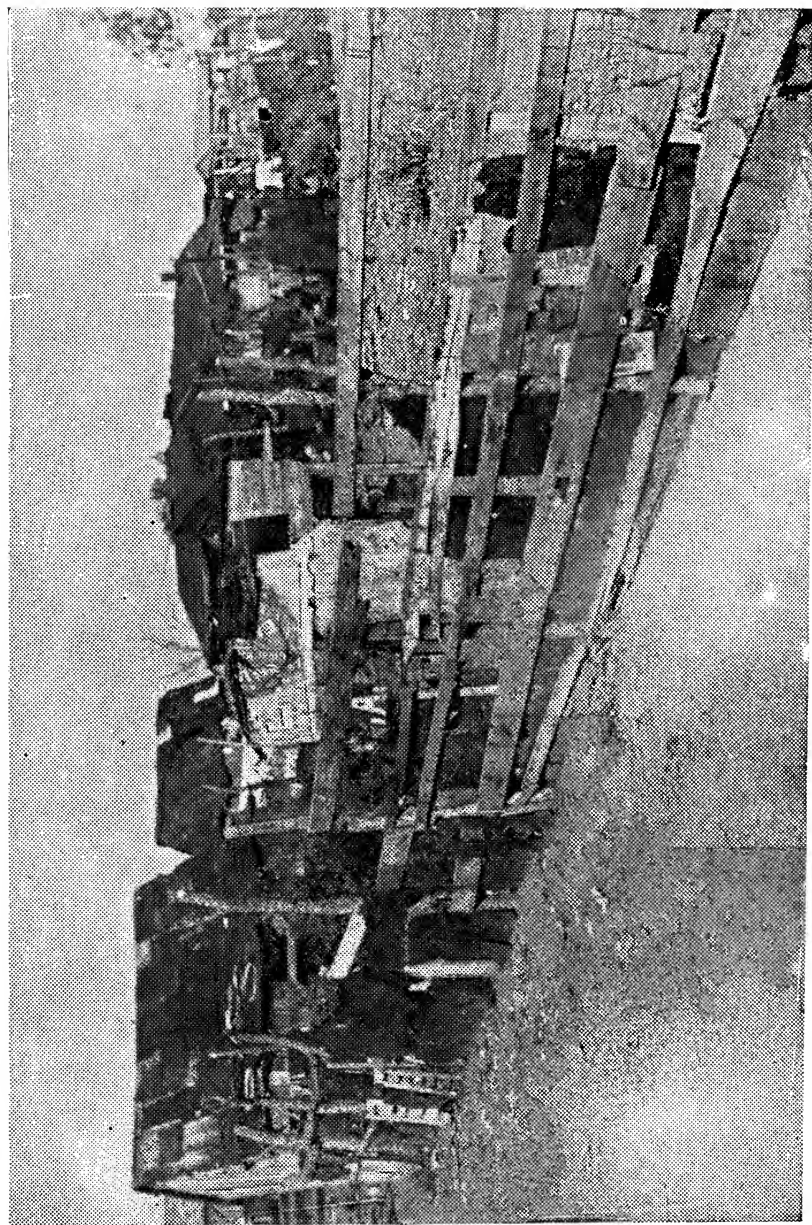
Just pause to think that the tamales one may purchase on the street came from that very same pot in yonder corral which boiled sullenly amid the foul air and the filth of the room that was forced to serve more than a culinary purpose in taking care of an overcrowded family. You saw a grimy senora rolling out tortillos upon a heavy stone base which she had placed in front of her on the gallery of one corral. You also looked into her living room and the kitchen that went with it and viewed in silent wonder the dirty appearance and general disorder that reigned in the two little rooms. Perhaps this shambling vendor is the lord and master of that humble abode and these the wares his spouse prepared for sale.

However, the risk one takes in matters of this kind is not peculiar to San Antonio. It's just as great in other places where Mexicans are housed together like sheep. In one of the smallest and dirtiest places in Dallas visited by the writer he discovered a white woman spreading cornmeal on corn-shucks while a Mexican man with deft but dirty fingers "chucked" in the meat "filling" and rolled the whole thing up like a cigarette to put away in the pot to boil. Should the whole scene, premises, workers and all, come to one in a dream he would surely wake up the next morning with the recollection of a nightmare.

In this does the public suffer immediately from neglect of the Mexican population that is found everywhere in Texas. Without assistance from the people in the getting of homes, these timid, helpless foreigners must shift for themselves and make the most of a bad situation. They are usually of the class that is on friendly terms with dirt, and when they find themselves without facilities for being clean, and are compelled by necessity to live in hovels unfit for human habitation, they degenerate into a condition of uncleanness that seems to make them happier as it intensifies. In the meantime, the public which knows nothing about their places of abode and labor, and apparently cares less, continues to buy their goods and consume them with all the attendant risks of contact and consumption.



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

## **LAUDABLE PROJECTS UNDER WAY TO GIVE MEXICANS BETTER HOUSING**

(From Issue of Dec. 7.)

It was written in the beginning of this series of articles that housing conditions surrounding the working people of San Antonio were at once the best and the worst disclosed by an investigation of the conspicuous cities of Texas. Evil conditions that prevail there have been shown and now, turning the survey into more encouraging scenes, an effort will be made to reveal a picture of conditions of housing that conform largely to a more exacting program of scientific and sanitary construction, location and equipment of dwellings for the use of the laboring people.

A brief visit to the newer additions of the city that are given over largely to the residence of Mexicans soon suggests the conclusion that the occupants of the corrals and jacals are of the lower peon class of Mexicans and want nothing better, or they are temporarily situated financially under adverse circumstances that prevent them from bettering their condition of living, or, finally, they are unable to procure homes amid superior environments because of an insufficient supply. One of, or all these reasons, may enter the explanation of corral or jacal life. Suffice it to say that whatever inherent similarity may prevail between the occupant of the corral and the resident of the individual Mexican home, that common attribute or characteristic is lost in the transition from the stall to the cottage, in so far as its manifestation in outward appearances and apparent inward contentment is concerned. The family in the cottage obviously has a purpose in life and reveals it; the family in the corral shows plainly that it merely exists.

Several years ago, enterprising business men, who possessed at the same time a philanthropic impulse, conceived the idea of giving the Mexican population of San Antonio something it had long stood in need of—assistance from the public and a fighting chance. They took in the situation at a glance in all its uninviting details. Spread out before them was a scene upon which moved thousands of working Mexicans whose homes were hovels, crowded into space too small to accommodate them comfortably or decently. In Mexico they live that way, to be sure, but these business men felt that they should find conditions more beneficial and satisfying in the United States. The thing to be done was to rid the city of corrals and huts by providing individual homes for their residents upon a basis of purchase or rental not out of reach of the small wage-earner. Of course, the primary purpose behind this project was that of revenue, but at the same time the intention was to make the profits of the enterprise represent a just reward for philanthropic labor. Two promoters of an enterprise of this kind—both young men, graduates of the University of Texas, by the way—told the writer that they were materially assisted in launching their undertaking by philanthropic people of means who appreciated the work for its humanitarian value rather than because of its opportunity as a business venture.

Therefore, out of this movement having for its purpose first, the making of money, secondly the performance of a philanthropic work, there grew a large and profitable business, soliciting chiefly the patronage of Mexicans. Land was purchased within the city limits not too far away from the business districts to allow the transportation problem to intrude itself as a serious obstacle. This property was cut up into lots ranging in dimensions from thirty-five to forty

feet wide by seventy-five to one hundred feet long. Anyone desiring a home of his own can have one in this territory for the payment of a small sum, a dollar or two dollars, down, and the same amount weekly thereafter until the entire debt shall have been liquidated. A house will be built for him. It is a small house, to be sure, the size and cost of construction varying little from a common standard. But he wants a small house. It is the only house he can afford. And he takes possession immediately upon its construction or the payment of the first installment, happy and content in the consciousness that he has a home, and ambitious, generally, to make of it the very best that he can.

### WHAT THE HOUSES COST.

Houses of this kind are built in San Antonio at a cost ranging from \$180 to \$300, the entire investment for lot and house rarely exceeding \$400 to \$500, the idea being to require weekly payments that will liquidate each obligation in not more than five years. The system necessitates thousands of accounts, but they are not too much trouble to keep. Then, they are profitable.

Various types of houses are constructed. There are three-room, four-room and five-room cottages. Some of them are the old-style shotgun houses, with rooms opening one into the other in a direct line. Others are more satisfactory in architecture, being built with something more in mind than simply the idea of providing shelter from the rain and protection from the sun. Most of them are equipped with running water, but as yet sewerage connections have not been made owing to the limitations of the city's system. Outside closets, therefore, are necessary.

The other prominent deficiency in this house is its lack of bathtubs. Few are constructed with bathroom facilities. They will, perhaps, come in time.

However, despite these structural defects the individual house is proving the solution of the Mexican housing question in that it affords the family freedom and privacy. The family has its own premises to do with what it pleases. It is not crowded and need not suffer the moral and physical injuries attending the congestion of houses or people within them.

While they are not large, the lots are ample to the needs of the home and provide space for flower beds and vegetable gardens and opportunity for the children to romp and play without undue restraint.

Owners of some of these houses have made them little bowers of beauty. A morning's ride through any of these additions will disclose here and there a \$200 cottage wearing at first glance the appearance of a \$1,000 house merely because its setting of lawn and flowers shows it off to superior advantage. Some of the houses are almost covered with vines and trailing roses. Others are fragrant in envelopes of honeysuckle. Great red dahlias or kindred blooms lend brilliance to the color scheme, and even the tiny violet finds affectionate care from some member of the household. For its size, and considering its cost, one of the prettiest yards in San Antonio surrounds a \$200 shotgun house. In short, the evolution of this plan has made homes where homes did not exist and for people who, many thought, had no idea of a home other than in its conception of a place to sleep and eat.

### MANY RESIDENTS OWN THEIR HOMES.

Housing evils have not noticeably intruded themselves into the homes of the American working people of the city. There are a great many individually owned homes which, for the most part, are kept in admirable condition. Natural

advantages contribute much to the ease of beautification in San Antonio, and these have been made use of universally by home-owners, both rich and poor alike. The lots upon which houses are built range from forty to fifty feet and sometimes more in width and are as a rule about twice as long as they are wide. The city's sewer system is not adequate to the needs of the people, but where mains are accessible connection is compulsory under municipal ordinance. There is very little evidence, indeed, of house congestion, and so far as the writer's information goes there is but a paucity of overcrowding of people among the homes of the American working people.

Many of the negroes of San Antonio are housed in the ordinary shotgun cottage, and there is more or less overcrowding indoors, but as a rule the houses are pretty well separated one from the other. They are erected upon lots of the usual dimensions. There are here and there, and quite frequently, too, shanties and hovels in the last stages of delapidation, but they can not be said to be the rule. The negro is universally an occupant who is hard on his house in his use of it. He is not inherently cleanly and is disposed to enjoy himself under conditions of filth that are revolting to the average white person. The negro quarters of San Antonio, among the lower classes, evidence this trait of character. The yards are littered with trash. Where there are no sewer connections, even for kitchen drainage, the back yard or the front, it doesn't matter much which it is, frequently gets the dishwasher. There are in San Antonio, however, many well-to-do negroes who own their own homes and maintain their premises in a pleasing condition of orderliness and sanitation.

All in all, it might be well to say that if the city of San Antonio would extend its sewer mains, do away with the outside closet, devote more attention to its streets, bring to bear greater pressure upon its force of sanitary inspectors, it would then find its housing problem confined to the Mexicana population almost exclusively. The corral may go eventually under the aggression made upon it by business projects now looking to the better housing of the Mexicans, but it seems to have a pretty tight hold on the situation. It, too, would more speedily disappear were it to receive municipal attention. The huts and hovels must ultimately make room for houses, and as the transition takes place they will probably be pushed farther and farther out until they are beyond the limits of the city.

---

## **DARK ROOMS OF HOUSTON FORM SMALL BUT IMPORTANT PART OF ITS PROBLEM**

(From Issue of Dec. 8.)

It was in Houston that the writer saw for the first time during his recent investigations that architectural iniquity known as the dark room. It presents a phase of the general housing problem that is not widely manifest in Texas, but its simple presence, restricted though it be to remote and infrequent instances, is by housing experts regarded as the sinister foreshadowing of menacing evils that must be eradicated at once to preserve future conditions against irreparable injury.

Once the dark room takes firm hold, its elimination becomes a matter of vast expense and indefatigable effort. New York's experience proves this, for despite the time and money expended in behalf of crusades to remove this social bane there are yet in the metropolis more than one hundred thousand rooms in



which human beings live without natural light or ventilation save that which comes through the one door that gives access to a passage way equally dark and gloomy.

In the beginning of this series of articles the statement was made that if there were dark rooms in Texas the writer's investigation had failed to elicit information concerning their whereabouts. This statement at that time was true. The time allowed for the investigation was not sufficient, as one would quickly surmise, to permit a house-to-house inspection throughout the larger cities of the State, and had it not been for the very systematic and complete survey of the city of Houston, made recently by the social service committee of the Men and Religion Forward Movement, such information, perhaps, would have been long in coming to the public.

Under the immediate direction of J. P. Kranz, secretary, this committee instituted and completed a careful survey of the city of Houston, particularly with respect to housing conditions prevailing there. Assisting Mr. Kranz, who is, himself, a social worker of many years' experience in the North, East and South, were a corps of experts whose training has been especially in the field of social surveying. A house-to-house inspection was made of those sections of the city given over largely to the residences of working people, and toward the end of the survey the social workers reported the information to headquarters that they had discovered a dozen or more dark rooms in some of the town's multiple residences. This information Mr. Kranz, himself, set out to verify and courteously permitted the writer to accompany him. A few moments' walk from the Y. M. C. A. Building brought the party to the first house indicated by the surveyors. In a trice Mr. Kranz had opened the doors of dark rooms embodying every essential detail of that housing evil; and their pernicious influence was aggravated, as the case is frequently, if not usually found to be, by a degree of overcrowding which, in the absence of actual observation, is largely inconceivable.

The building was a large workingman's rooming house, situated almost within the heart of the city. It occupied a position between two structures equally large, the lower floor being devoted to commercial purposes, the upper to the housing of dozens of tenants. Climbing a long flight of stairs the visitors found themselves in a small hall or reception room that opened into a passage way which ran the full length of the building. Rooms opened to this hall as do the rooms of hotels. Everything was dark, the faint glimmerings of light that flickered through an overhead transom being insufficient to illuminate the hall. A heavy, sickening incense filled the air. It was not the fumes of burning disinfectants. The dark surroundings and faint pallor of whitewashed walls suggested a place uncanny—an appropriate vestibule for the swinging of heathen censers to cruel, unsympathetic and voracious gods.

The visitors proceeded down the dark hall and opened the first door on the left. Abyssmal blackness met the eye. Not a faint ray of light, not an object could be seen. Gradually becoming accustomed to the darkness the vision began to penetrate the gloom of the room and discern blacker things which the light of a match later showed to be beds. They were double beds and there were three of them. The room was, perhaps, eighteen feet long by ten or twelve feet wide. The ceiling and walls were plastered—bleak and bare. The door through which entrance was obtained was the only outlet of the room. Not a window nor a transom nor a ventilator could be perceived. A threadbare rug partially covered the floor. Three chairs completed the furnishings. Not a washstand, a bureau

nor a mirror was in view. A single incandescent light was suspended from the ceiling by a corded wire. And above the damp and musty odor that pervaded the room arose the pungent scent-particles of that strange aroma which filled the hall.

The next room was visited, then another and another. All were dark. All depended for light and ventilation upon the doors that opened into the hall. None had even a window opening to the adjoining room. None had a complete equipment of furniture. All had three double beds apiece. And to them all that heavy, sickening perfume had permeated.

The rooms on one side of the house were dark—every one of them. An airshaft on the opposite side saved the compartments of that part of the building from being entirely dark. But the light and ventilation it gave were meager. These rooms were hardly more desirable than the others.

In the rear of the hall was found the sink at which the water supply was procured. Near-by was the toilet, inadequately partitioned off from the hall. With those the list of conveniences ended.

The mistress of the house shortly appeared on the scene, and immediately cleared up the mystery of the incense.

"I burn that," she said, "to get rid of the bad odors that arise from so many people sleeping in the house."

She held out a handful of small aromatic crystals which she took from her apron pocket.

"Why don't you fumigate with disinfectants?" she was asked.

She didn't know what to disinfect with, she said. No one had ever told her, and thinking, perhaps, that the infection was removed when the smell had gone, she had done the best thing she could to protect her house from contagion. Advised as to what to do, she thanked her informant effusively and promised to try the new method at once and abandon the use of her makeshift censers.

Yet, this woman's house was clean. It was free of superficial dirt, anyway. The coverings of the beds in the rooms that were viewed were neatly spread and the floors appeared to have been thoroughly swept. The meager furnishings were arranged with due regard for order. There were no evidences of shiftlessness on the part of the proprietor. She, as well as her hapless roomers, was the victim of thoughtless construction and unsanitary arrangement of the house in which she lived. Her efforts to do her duty as the matron of a lodging house were established by her persistent, though ineffectual use of incense as a means of preventing disease. She merely needed instruction and an adequate house to relieve her lodgers of their pernicious environment.

This house with its dark rooms is typical of other conditions in Houston though they are not of frequent occurrence. And it is perhaps typical of conditions in other cities of Texas though nowhere else were dark rooms seen on the writer's tour of investigation. It is probable that in the absence of a house-to-house canvass, such as was made by the social service committee in Houston, nothing but the merest accident would reveal them. Hidden away in remote places, and existing doubtless only in small numbers, they are difficult to find. This is one of the hopeful features of the housing problem as it is affected by houses of such construction. It can be solved immediately and prevented from arising again simply by a process of legislation. If landlords hereafter are permitted to construct houses for rental purposes without first having conformed to definite legal provisions in their plans, dark rooms may be

expected to grow in number. If lodging houses shall be constructed without regard to light and ventilation, and every available space shall be used for rental purposes, there will be no means of preventing the occurrence of dark rooms. If the bigger houses of the rich are permitted to become the made-over tenements of the poor, greed, necessity and false economy will conspire to increase the frequency of dark rooms. For it is unquestionably a simpler task to build houses with windows in every room than it is to compel their installation after the house shall have been erected.

The dark room requires no condemnation other than a complete understanding of what it is. That conveyed to the public, the dark room then becomes its own aggressive enemy.

## OVERCROWDING IN HOUSTON IS ONE OF CITY'S IMPORTANT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

(From Issue of Dec. 9.)

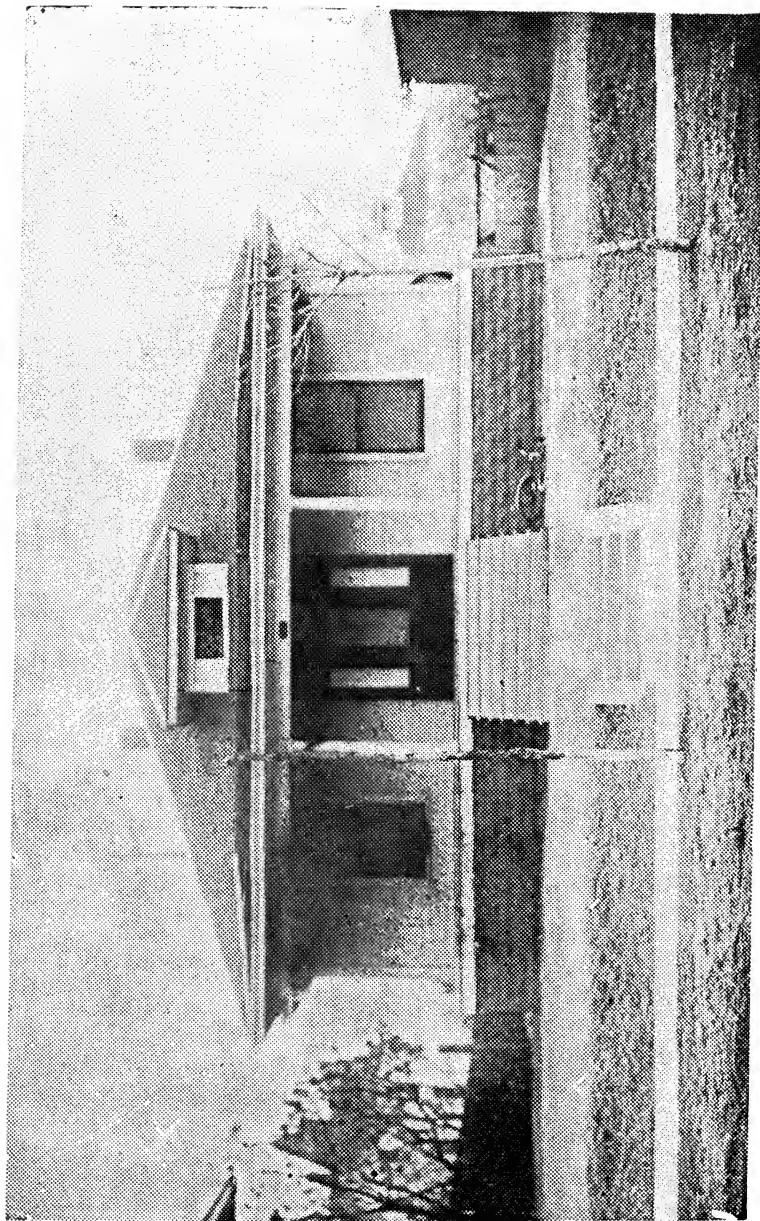
Houston, as every city that has real housing problems, is overcrowded in parts. That is, residences are made to accommodate too many occupants to promote conditions conducive to health and morality, and the houses, themselves, are built too close together to provide ample area for adequate sanitation, privacy, quiet and the home playground that should be at the disposal of the children.

To determine where crowding ends and overcrowding begins, is something of a difficult undertaking. The best authorities on housing and sanitation declare that there can be no fixed standards by which these evils shall be gauged, because surrounding conditions often exert determining influences rather than does the bare fact of so many people on so much ground or in so many rooms. For an example it can not in justice be required that an acre of ground shall never accommodate residents in excess of 200 or 300 or 500. The evil of overcrowding depends rather upon how they are accommodated than upon the number of people residing on an acre of land. Hundreds of persons may live in the tall hotels of the country, occupying, perhaps, no more ground base than one acre or thereabouts, but no one could justly describe conditions prevailing within the hotels as overcrowded. Lawrence Veiller writes in his excellent work on "Housing Reform" that he does not believe an arbitrary standard may be adopted by which overcrowding may be determined. "In some parts of China," he says, "where the number of people to the acre is very much less than it is in many parts of modern New York, conditions of living are infinitely worse from the point of view of overcrowding and congestion. \* \* \* Congestion and overcrowding are not to be determined by the number of people living on a given area of land. The vital question is the distribution of such population, the actual close proximity in which people live."

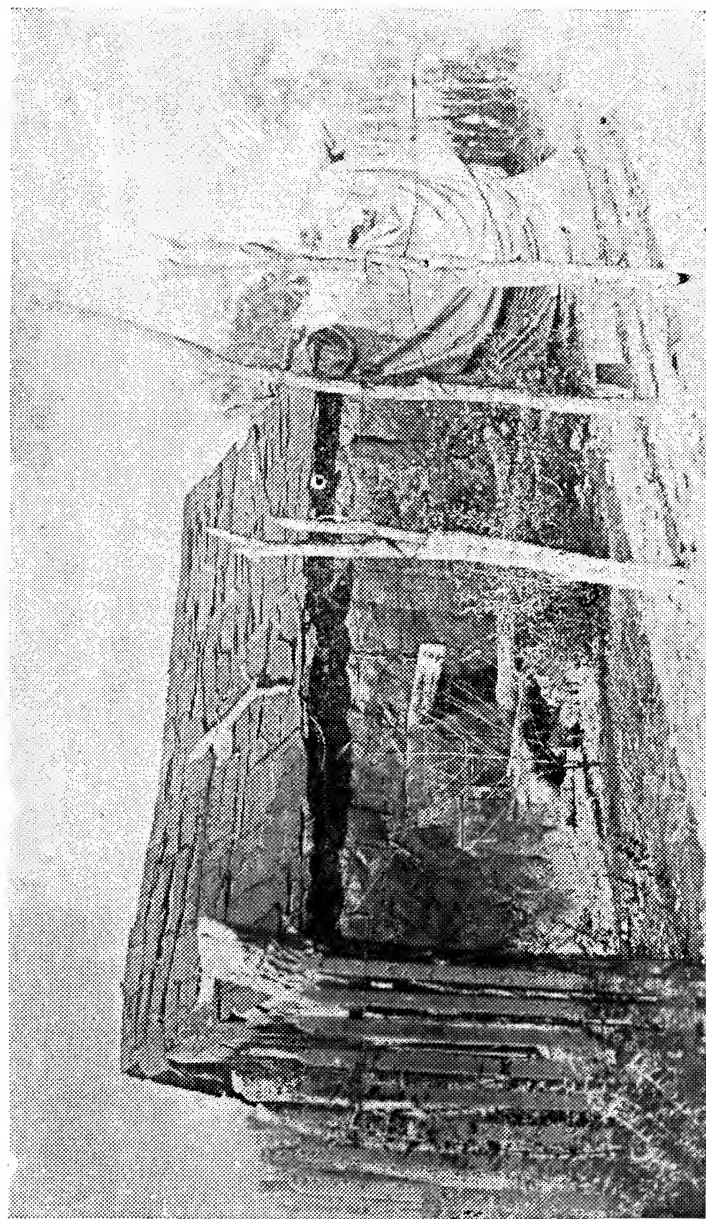
In Houston—and the same is true of Dallas, Galveston, San Antonio and other large cities of Texas—conditions fully meet this definition. There is overcrowding of limited areas of land with an undue population, brought about by the close proximity of the houses in which people live, resulting in congestion, and there is also the overcrowding of rooms within the houses. As between the two there is little choice. Both are baneful and pernicious conditions, and when found together, their influence for evil augments in potency.

### STANDARD NOT INFALLIBLE.

The standard of a minimum volume of cubic air space has been the only medium adopted in this country to determine room overcrowding. In many cities this standard has been 400 cubic feet of air for each adult and 200 for each child under 12 years of age occupying a room. And yet this standard is declared to be of little value, because adherence to it would not necessarily bring about conditions of living beneficial to the occupants of the room. The kind of air that is provided is as vital as the quantity. And the frequency of its renewal is



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

of equal importance. Mr. Veiller says it "makes a very great difference whether the air comes from a broad street or from a narrow alley, from a large backyard or from a narrow airshaft."

It will be necessary to cite but a few illustrations to show the evils of overcrowding as it prevails in Houston among the residences of unskilled working people. There are innumerable instances of overcrowding that defy both the sanitary requirement of sufficient volume of air and that of its frequent and adequate renewal.

In some of the dark rooms, spoken of in a previous article, found in Houston, provision is made for the sleeping of six persons. The rooms are not large rooms, containing, perhaps, no more than 1,500 cubic feet of air. The pro-rata part of that volume of air to each six occupants would be 250 cubic feet. That is 150 cubic feet of air below the standard adopted generally throughout the United States. Well ventilated, though it might be, it is plausible to assume that so small a quantity of air would be insufficient to meet the requirements of health. But well ventilated—such rooms are not. Their only means of ventilation is the doorway opening upon the hall or to another room. Fresh air forced by pressure through the hall would not provide thorough circulation to these rooms. They are absolutely cut off from ventilation as well as light. One may well imagine how quickly the supply of air be vitiated by the respiration of six occupants.

Again, the writer saw four large rooms, approximately 15x15x8 in dimensions, situated in a direct line with doors opening from one to another, each with eight single beds neatly arranged along the walls of the room. Two windows were cut in each room, opening to a narrow airshaft formed by the proximity of another building. Opposite these windows doors opened into other rooms. They were customarily kept closed. The volume of air in each of these sleeping rooms was reduced to about 280 cubic feet for each occupant. Its renewal was not sufficient to the needs of the residents. When cold weather comes there is no ventilation at night. The windows are kept closed, the doors are shut, and the many sleepers are compelled to breathe throughout the night air that is not provided in sufficient volume to give each his full quota under prevailing standards, and which is also robbed of its purity by the natural processes of respiration.

### OVERCROWDING IN SMALL HOUSES.

Then, in the smaller houses overcrowding prevails widely in Houston. Here was found a house, the six rooms of which (one being a kitchen) contained thirteen people. Another house of four rooms (one being a kitchen) provides accommodations for thirteen people. Still another group of thirteen people were housed in five rooms, one being, also, a kitchen. Seven of these residents were adults. Another instance was found of fourteen persons (eight of them adults) living in five rooms, one of which was a kitchen. And still another house of six rooms (one a kitchen) accommodated eleven adults and two children.

These are merely instances typical of conditions that widely prevail in Houston. And they are also typical of conditions in other cities of the State. Housing laws are lacking and there is no legal prohibition imposed upon the landlord or the renter against overcrowding houses to the point of injury to health and social standards. And yet the enactment of measures contemplating relief for such conditions is a matter of difficulty. To this point Mr. Veiller devotes extended discussion in his recent work. Summarizing he says:

"No adequate method has yet been devised of effectively preventing room overcrowding. The attempts made thus far have all been in the direction of limiting by law the number of people occupying a room with reference to the amount of cubic air space in it. Unfortunately, such a provision is almost impossible of enforcement. In order to enforce it, inspections must be made at night. It is only then that the lodgers and boarders, the chief causes of overcrowding, are to be found. To question the tenement dwellers in the daytime with regard to their practice of taking in boarders or lodgers, is to ask them to convict themselves, and such investigations are obviously of little value. To adequately carry on night inspections of the homes of the poor would require an army of inspectors. It would involve, moreover, an invasion of the privacy of the home, which is repugnant to American institutions. The routing out of workingmen's families

after midnight in order to determine whether they have boarders or lodgers living with them would be intolerable.

"To cope with the problem of overcrowding and the lodger evil effectively, the law should place upon the landlord the responsibility for an undue number of people in his house, as it has already placed upon him, in the case of women of ill repute, responsibility for their character. In certain classes of tenements the taking in of lodgers or boarders, except with the written consent of the landlord, must be prohibited and the landlord must be held responsible for any departure from this rule. This principle has not as yet been recognized by any American city, but it is one that must be established if this evil is to be overcome."

Texas cities, therefore, have an opportunity to become pioneers in this field of social endeavor. Conditions, easily ascertainable by persons interested, clearly demonstrate the necessity for something of the kind to be done.

## **CITY'S INATTENTION TO SURROUNDINGS AUGMENTS HOUSTON'S HOUSING PROBLEM**

(From Issue of Dec. 10.)

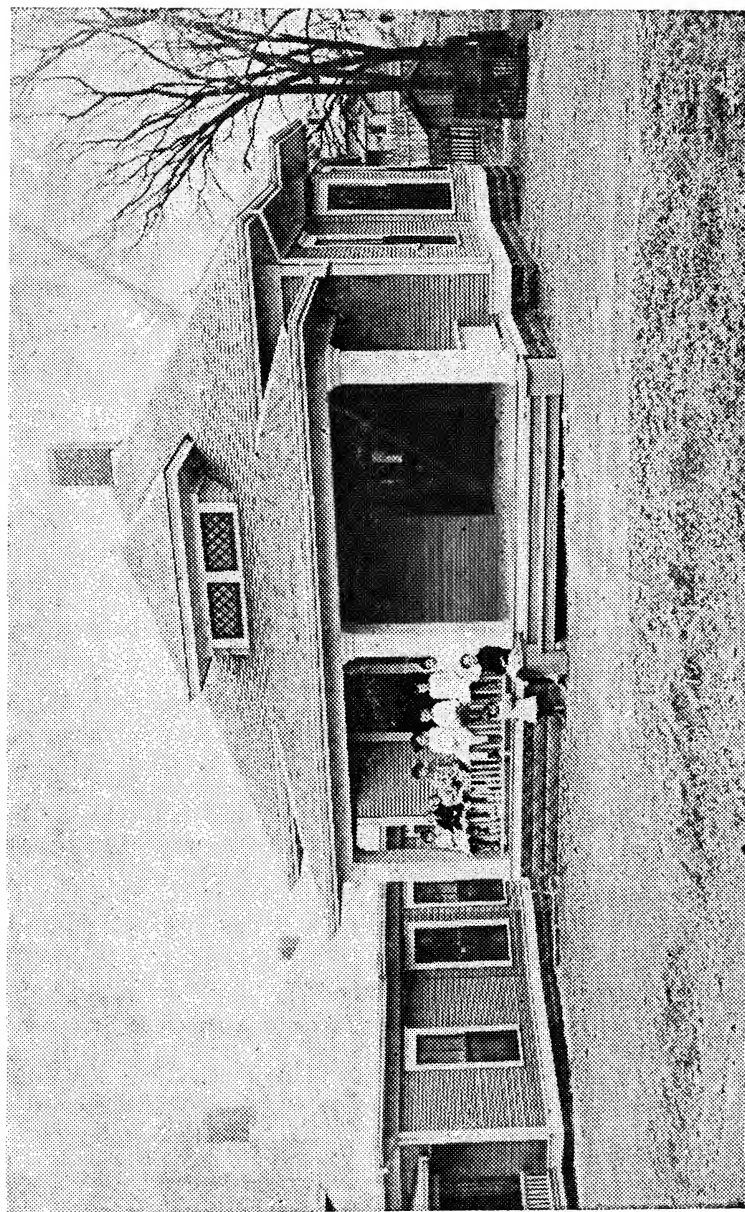
Complicating the housing problem in Houston—as the case has proved to be in all the leading cities of Texas—is the city's own heedlessness of or inattention to physical conditions that have arisen outside of the homes from the continued ignorance or neglect of the public. It is true that Texas cities have grown so rapidly during the last few years that they have been virtually unable to accompany their growth by adequate facilities to the proper living of communities which it is the function of municipal government to provide. Nevertheless, it is for this reason especially that public effort toward the elimination of undesirable conditions and the extension of the good should be redoubled, otherwise control may never be acquired over certain phases of the social problem.

A survey of the city reveals first the inadequacy of the sewer system. It is not co-extensive with the territory of the municipality, and where mains are accessible to property, connection is not always enforced. As a result of this there are in Houston a large number of surface closets, together with numerous though isolated systems of cesspools. There are frequent instances of makeshift sewers, used largely for drainage purposes, which have been constructed by the tenants or under theirs or the landlord's supervision without regard for sanitary regulations. Pipes for such purposes lead from the kitchen overground to the nearest ravine running into Buffalo Bayou. All manner of liquid refuse is conveyed through them to gullies not remote from the houses, there to drain slowly to the stream further away.

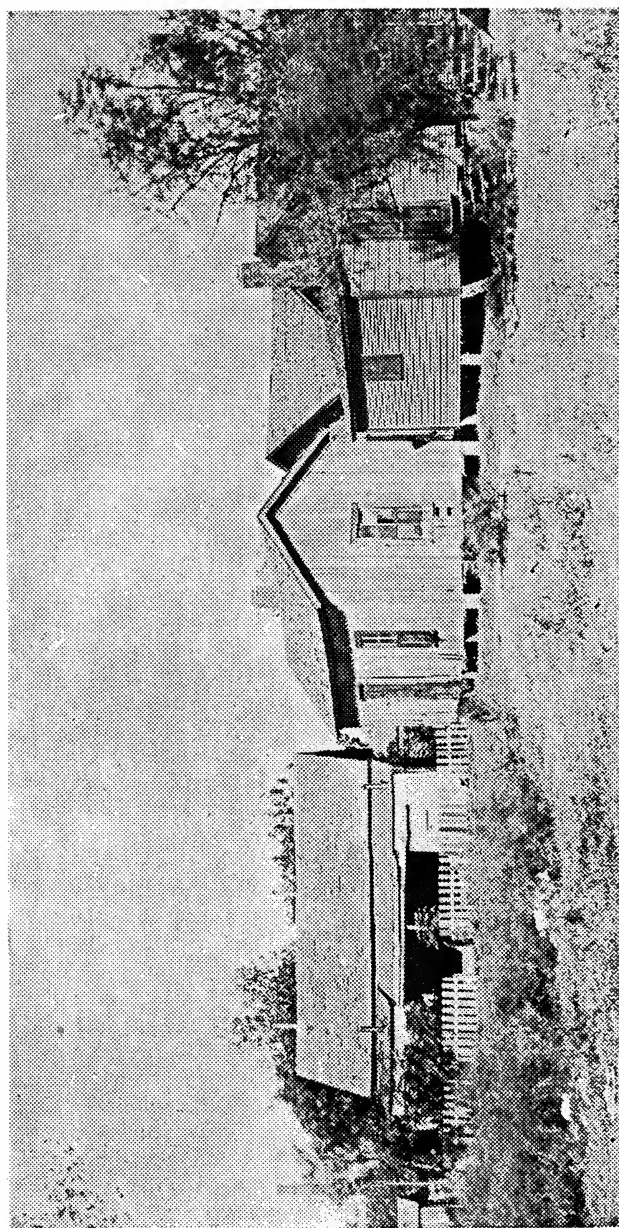
### **SEWER SYSTEM IS INADEQUATE.**

One illustration of this negligence of sewer regulations comes graphically to mind. Going down a narrow cul-de-sac situated near the bayou a turn through a gate reveals two rows of houses facing each other on the bank of the stream, a fence dividing them. One of the rows is composed of ramshackle dwellings, built high upon stilts to give a semblance of a common floor level. The other row comprises a number of rather neat cottages erected upon ground that gives many evidences of having been made by layer upon layer of the city's trash and refuse. At the end of the property the bank of the bayou is being filled in by a similar process. Between the stream and these rows of houses is a wide space of ground devoted to the maintenance of horses and cattle. A rough system of sewerage connects these dwellings with—the horse lot. However, it is not used





"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC UNATTRACTIVENESS."

for the removal of fecal wastes. One row of houses is connected with a cesspool constructed under one of the buildings; the other uses surface closets. The surrounding premises are in bad condition from a sanitary viewpoint and from them arises a decidedly noisome odor.

A house-to-house inspection of 100 dwellings in a certain part of Houston was made. The territory is by no means the worst in the city, inasmuch as forty of the houses faced paved streets, forty-two had cement sidewalks and nine had walks constructed of brick. Nevertheless, only thirty-three of these houses had sanitary closets. Seventy-one had surface closets. The excess of the total—100—is accounted for by the fact that some of the houses had both sanitary and surface closets.

In this neighborhood one instance was found of three families using one closet, one instance of four families using the same closet, and one instance of eight. Likewise, there were discovered two instances of five families using one water tap and one instance of eight families depending upon one hydrant for their water supply. Of course, they had to go after the water and bring it home in buckets. The number of bathtubs bore a more or less constant ratio to the number of sanitary sewers. Most of these houses were rental property, only sixteen being owned by their occupants.

### OPEN GUTTERS ARE FREQUENT.

There are many open gutters in Houston that poorly fulfill their function, mere ditches to which little attention is apparently paid. Weeds grow up and interfere with the flow of rain water and cause pools to form and stagnate, affording ideal cultures for the propagation of mosquitoes. Eighty of the 100 houses previously referred to faced open gutters of this type, and before twenty-one of them stagnant pools of water were found. Conditions of the kind are frequently found to be in a state of nuisance.

And, perhaps, more remarkable than anything in connection with the survey of this territory of the city, was the discovery that in not a single instance among these one hundred houses was the municipal ordinance regarding the collection and care of garbage complied with. The ordinance prescribes a non-leakable covered can, and these are what was found: Forty-one boxes, eighteen tubs, four barrels, four tin cans. Twenty-six houses had no receptacle for garbage whatsoever. Similarly, thirty-one of these houses were screened; the others were not screened despite the necessity for screening and the use of other methods of controlling the mosquito pest in the coast country.

In Houston, too, are found the jacals of San Antonio. There is a row of them along the banks of the Bayou not a remote distance from the heart of the city. They have been constructed of tins, sheet iron, barrel staves, boxes and any other available material which the junk heaps of the dumping ground may have provided. The little shacks have been in existence a long time. One of the occupants pointed to a tall tree growing beside the door of his hut and told the writer that he had planted "just a little switch fifteen years ago" when he took possession of the site and began the construction of his hovel. This man owned two of the structures, one of which he used for sleeping and the other for cooking purposes. However, with the coming of cold weather he closed up his sleeping apartment and cooked, ate and slumbered in his crowded little kitchen. During a brief conversation this long-time resident told the writer that the city owned the land on which the shacks were built. No restrictions were

placed upon occupancy. A family could enter the lot and build its own dwelling place under the common acceptance, perhaps, of squatters' rights. Shacks become vacant and soon are occupied again. The population is more or less transient—all but the old timer. Like Tennyson's brook, tenants come and go, but the original settler goes on forever. The day the writer visited this row of huts a Mexican family occupied one of them, a crippled white woman and her daughter another, and transient lodgers, seeking a night's refuge from the weather, were sharing the shelter, such as it was, of the others. The old man was the only permanent dweller of the row.

## **AUSTIN IS NOT CONFRONTED BY A SERIOUS HOUSING PROBLEM AT PRESENT**

(From Issue of Dec. 11.)

Of the conspicuous cities of Texas Austin is perhaps the least afflicted with housing troubles. As Galveston, the city has comparatively few poor inhabitants. It is an educational rather than an industrial or a commercial center, and therefore it does not offer the same advantages of employment to working people that are held out by other cities of the State. As a result of this Austin has not been driven to the extremities of housing that have followed industrial development elsewhere, and overcrowding of homes and congestion of premises are housing evils that are comparatively unknown in the Capital, although, to be sure, there are found here and there isolated instances that serve to show the tendency to improper growth wherever conditions arise in a city that are not under absolute control of its authorities.

However, Austin is looking forward to considerable industrial development following the completion of the contemplated dam across the Colorado River above the town. Before the first dam broke, about ten years ago, the city was on the highway to success as a manufacturing center, inasmuch as the power necessary to move the machinery of all kinds of factories was provided in plenty and at reasonable rates. With the breaking of the dam, blasting encouraging prospects and plunging the city into debt, the Capital entered a decade of depression from which it is emerging successfully and by the mistakes of which it seeks to profit in its future activities. Should the dam be restored—as present indications predict—the leading citizens of the town foretell for Austin a brilliant future. It will doubtless develop manufactures as an important part of its industrial life. If so, factory hands and their families will come to the city in large numbers and will want homes. If Austin fail to provide for them in advance, a few years will suffice indubitably to present a housing problem as difficult of solution as that which confronts the other growing industrial centers of the State. Thus far the city has done little municipal planning as the cause and inspiration of its renaissance—commission government—has not been in use long enough to bring about all the betterments and improvements that are contemplated. Nevertheless, there is need of city planning at the Capital, and in the event of the dam's completion and the development of manufacturing industries there, the necessity will manifest itself more vividly as the years roll by.

The city is growing with noticeable rapidity. In nowise is it crowded now from a housing viewpoint, yet the encroachment of evil housing conditions is so insidious and deceptive that it should behoove every community that can prevent undesirable consequences to employ preclusive means rather than to wait for the coming of difficulties and irritate itself by the discouraging task of cure.

### **SOME RAMSHACKLE HOUSES THERE.**

Perhaps the most noticeable inadequacy of housing in Austin is the ramshackle condition of dwellings in the older settlements, together with the incompleteness of the sewer system. Negro homes are as a rule in poor condition physically and are not maintained in accordance with the provisions of the sanitary code. Along the banks of streams that flow through the town numerous

isolated instances of bad housing occur, although there are only infrequent cases of collective evils. There are a few groups of tenant houses, comparatively speaking, that exhibit the evil of congested premises, but as a rule, taking the sections occupied by working people as a whole, the houses are situated upon large lots and are not representative of a sole desire to wring the greatest amount of revenue out of the smallest possible investment.

The city's streets are not good, save those upon which the administration has been at work. One of the prominent defects of the town is its meager paving. But the authorities have designed a plan of improvement that is progressing rapidly in its execution, much to the beautification of the town as well as to its substantial betterment. The residential districts have not yet been reached in the working out of this program of civic improvement. They will be given attention in the due course of progress. And with the plan of street improvement naturally goes that of extending the sewer system commensurate with the territory of the town. When this shall have been done, surface outhouses will disappear, thereby relieving the city of the nuisance inevitably attending limited systems of sewerage.

There are in Austin a number of enterprises looking to the provision of homes for working people. These are succeeding as a rule, and in their success, if in nothing else immediately apparent, the growth and augmenting prosperity of the town are shown. Additions are being opened on sites not too remote from the heart of the business district in which people of limited means may procure homes upon terms they are able to meet. The class of homes that are filling up these additions is good. There is apparent an effort to beautify the premises as well as to provide in the home the more necessary elements of a home. Enterprises of this character have served to increase the number of homes that are owned by their occupants—in the long run the safe and certain solution of the housing problem.

---

## CROWDING OF HOUSES IS REDUCED TO A SCIENCE IN CITY OF FORT WORTH

(From Issue of Dec. 12.)

In the continuous effort of solving those problems of housing which encroach at first so unobtrusively upon the social arrangement of a city, Fort Worth has had to a marked extent the assistance of organized labor. The influence of unionism toward the improvement of social conditions, and especially in its effect upon means of housing the working people of restricted earning power, has been exerted both directly and indirectly, but it is, perhaps, due more considerably to its indirect exercise that the principles of proper housing have been given wide application among that portion of the citizenship that depends for its livelihood upon limited means. This is manifested in the large proportion that union labor bears to the entire citizenship and to the whole body of working people, and is emphasized in the large percentage of home-owners among those of small revenue.

Ownership of homes seems to be a prominent ambition among Fort Worth's working people, both skilled and unskilled, and where this ambition has been realized or is being gradually attained through processes of thrift, saving and investment, there is no evidence of a deep-seated housing problem. Housing difficulties therefore, in Fort Worth, concern chiefly the negroes and the less competent of the unskilled workmen who are chiefly foreigners. It has been shown repeatedly by extensive statistics of unquestionable accuracy that housing problems arise and develop in direct proportion to the ratio which rental property of residential character bears to the ownership of homes. And where working people, skilled or unskilled, have acquired the habit of saving or investing what little they have in the construction and equipment of a home—small and spare though it be—it is inevitably disclosed that evil housing conditions are coming in line for ultimate if not immediate remedy. The large percentage of union labor has reduced the ratio of unskilled labor in Fort Worth and has correspondingly ameliorated conditions of housing that prevailed hitherto by stimulating ambition for home ownership through an increased basis of compensation. This is the writer's information from several exalted and dependable sources.

**CONTRAST OF CONDITIONS IS VIVID.**

Notwithstanding this condition of affairs—the preponderance of union labor and the benefits that it has wrought working people with respect to their homes—the fellow at the bottom of the social ladder has a pretty hard time in Fort Worth. Of course, he has a rough path to follow wherever he may chance to be, but the contrast between his condition and that of the chap just a little higher up—on the next rung, say—was perhaps never more vividly revealed than it is in this thriving city by the Trinity. The operation of inexorable social laws has been intensified in its blasting effect by the intrusion, at times, of inordinate greed, which seems determined to sate itself even at the expense of civic pride and the basic sentiments of humanity.

Crowding of houses has become something of a structural art in Fort Worth. It has been reduced to the basis of scientific accuracy. An observer can not well escape the conclusion that arrangement has been the subject of repeated mathematical calculations, the means involved being the smallest expenditure possible under a grasping, usurious policy of business and the end the greatest housing capacity possible to a cold, mercenary plan. No thought, apparently, is given the tenant; all thought is to the revenue to the landlord his occupancy will yield.

To build the greatest number of houses possible to a given area, entire city blocks have been quartered by narrow alleys hardly wide enough to permit the passage of a wagon drawn by a team of horses. Then, upon each quarter-section of the block, rows of houses will be erected, two of them facing the street, two of them the alleys. The whole gives the appearance of portions of a miniature city, with small streets and small houses for small people—a town like that to which the travels of Gulliver led him when he stumbled upon the precincts of the Lilliputians. There can be no air—the houses are too close together, and the small alleys do not provide sufficient space for proper renewal. There can be no privacy. Everybody knows what his neighbor is doing, and if he chance to retire before everybody else in the community has gone to bed, he must be well trained in courting Morpheus to slip off into Slumberland despite the hubbub surrounding him. A sick person, a sufferer of nervous diseases, has about three chances for health to ninety-seven for insanity, in the midst of the ordinary nightly babel and neighboring entertainments.

**SPECULATOR ON THE SCENE.**

And in this character of business a peculiar traffic has arisen. Such properties are undoubtedly good investments. All over Texas landlords have admitted this fact. They say it's hard money, but good money, meaning that it has to be watched carefully to avoid its escape through tenants who are given themselves, at times, to methods of shrewdness. Twenty to thirty per cent profit is not an infrequent revenue derived from the ownership of such property. But it is not always a certain, definite quantity. And when the earning power of the holdings is gauged by the capacity of selected periods of the year—when the houses are crowded—it appears more financially alluring than it really proves to be. With this knowledge, houses have been built in Fort Worth and efforts made to fill them with occupants—the greatest number possible in order to disclose a remarkable revenue. The usual plan of lot crowding has been followed. House after house, house after house, has been placed upon a block—and filled with tenants by the diligent effort, undoubtedly, of the speculator. Then, stressing the value of the property as a revenue earner, the speculator finds a credulous purchaser and disposes of it at a figure based upon its maximum dividends. When the purchaser finds that his property only brings him 20% a year, whereas it was sold to him, perhaps, upon a reliable representation of 30%, he exhibits his thorough appreciation of being “stung” by declining to keep it in repair, and allows it to run its own course of deterioration to the discredit of the city and the unhappiness of the tenant.

This practice, it is learned, used to prevail to a greater extent than it does now, although it is yet more or less in vogue. It is naturally frowned down upon by legitimate business and is universally censured by those who have the welfare of the city and the prosperity of its people at heart. In a conversation with the

writer, Mayor Davis caustically censured the principles of this kind of business, saying that it was not only a wrongful policy judged by business standards, but, moreover, it hampered the work of the city toward the elevation of the standards of living among its working people. In its efforts to beautify the city and make it more substantial, the municipal administration is at times handicapped by having an improved section of the town set back in its development by undertakings of this kind. From every viewpoint, therefore, the practice is condemned. That is from every viewpoint but that of the successful speculator. To him, perhaps, it paves the way to a gilt-edge proposition.

## FORT WORTH'S SHACKS AND SHANTIES FORM SERIOUS PART OF HOUSING PROBLEM

(From Issue of Dec. 13.)

Fort Worth has its quota of shacks and shanties. They border the business district, intrude themselves upon the residential areas of the well-to-do, and, intensifying the dull aspect of the Trinity River bottom, form the conspicuous breach in the continuity of modern appearances which gives to the North Side and the original city their metropolitan compactness. They appear in divers shapes and sizes. Their patterns—some of them—are relics of types of architecture now archaic, and their grim, suggestive visages conjure up the imaginings of childhood's ghost-lore. A fit place, one says of them, for the mysterious prowlings of midnight specters, the commission of ugly, uncanny deeds or the sequestration of rich caches of plunder. Scenes most unlovely under the bright eye of day, they become foreboding illusions when cast upon the dark screen of night, and are objects which the caution of the belated pedestrian peremptorily urges him to avoid.

About these huts and hovels of the Trinity there is nothing of the strange witchery of the jacals of the San Antonio. Way down South, amid the cactus and the chapparal, the rough-fashioned dwellings of bronze, sombreroed people, skirting the city, seem somehow to blend their bizarre arrangement in the picturesqueness of the bordering wilds. No such subtle charm attaches to the ramshackle cabins of the Trinity. Their crudeness, insufferable state of repair; the unsanitary environment in which they repose; their utter lack of proper equipment for respectable living—all these elements in their totality impose an incongruous blight upon the city that robs its very heart of the metropolitan aspect it should so proudly wear.

The bottom of the Trinity, separating the North Side from the larger territory of the city, is studded with these uninviting structures. They appear alone and in groups. Some bear faint evidences of an original plan; many of them do not, revealing rather as their guiding impulse a sole desire to throw together, haphazard, as it were, enough boards and scantlings to provide a temporary shelter in a time of storm. At best they are not living places, because of their situation. Low of altitude, they are naturally subjected to constant waves of noxious miasmata of the bottom lands. Compounded with these, the noisome effluvia of the slaughter pens and neighboring junk heaps could not be well expected to contribute to the joy of respiration nor to the health of residence there.

They are peopled with the poor—the flotsam and jetsam of the social tide that ask not for better because they do not know how to ask. They have trained themselves to a sort of contentment, at least to a habit of living, that does not permit complaint of things that can not be helped. They evince a stoicism more indurated by the cold processes of circumstance than elevated by the noble influence of fortitude. They want little, have less and never expect more. So why should it not suffice that they continue as they are? Society's disdainful question may some day be answered unexpectedly.



### PROBLEM OF THE MUD.

Across the river, on the North Side, one enters the atmosphere of a foreign clime. The chatter of strange tongues comes to the ears from little groups of men idling on the streets or from husky housewives bending diligently over wash-tubs in back yards cluttered with heterogeneous masses of trash that defy assortment into their multifarious forms. The musical prattle of children at their play in volume alone insures at least one section of the commonwealth against the calamity of race suicide. Opportunity there is unlimited for the pronouncement of Rooseveltian benisons.

On and on one may go through a city of little homes. Many of them are neat and attractive, evidencing painstaking care in their up-keep. These, beyond doubt, are owned by their occupants. They have the atmosphere of home. Their premises are not neglected and the houses reveal in appearance the fulfillment of functions other than the mere provision of refuge from the weather.

And then there are others—many of them. They are indeed a grewsome spectacle. Rattletrap affairs that threaten to fall before the first harsh gust of wind. Roofs that leak and sometimes blow away; casements torn out and remnants of abandoned blankets filled in; porches broken at each end or in the middle, leading to dark and gloomy hallways that open into drearier rooms; doors hanging, neglected, from rusty, broken hinges; fences that have long since lost their continuity and their service; outhouses in the last stages of dismemberment, poisoning the air with their effluent odors; front and back yards littered with trash and refuse and the whole premises floating, figuratively, in a viscous sea of mud—these elements form the picture of parts of the Bohunk district of Fort Worth's North Side on the third day of a slow, continuous rain.

That mud! Ankle-deep wasn't even the beginning. Crossing the street or pursuing his way along the sidewalk or across some private premises, one might seek to pick his route in vain. It soon reduced itself to a proposition of clinching the teeth and grimly stalking ahead with a muttered imprecation upon the bad fix in which he found himself, together with a fleet though fervent thought of thankfulness that he didn't wear low-quartered shoes. If he had, they would never have come out of that mud—on his feet. Mud to the right of him, mud to the left of him, enveloped the scene, and, warm and perspiring with the repeated exertion of extricating one foot from the reluctant tentacles of one place only to have the other seized with a firmer hold, the pedestrian, pausing to gaze upon the countless pools in their muddy beds, doubtless repined with the Ancient Mariner as to the ubiquity of the water and the nothingness of the drink.

### IMPROVEMENT PAYS IN LONG RUN.

And in it all these people lived. The pretty pavements of which the Panther City boasts do not extend to the house-fronts of poor people like these. But, perhaps, they do not want them. Loblollies are such a relief, anyway—after they are gone. That is the case if people of the kind can extract from circumstance the same philosophy that inspired the Irishman in the story to pound his toe with a hammer "because it felt so good when it quit hurting." But as to decent and sanitary living—it is hardly possible amid such surroundings as these. It is true that when the weather is fair there is no mud, but when it rains the situation in some parts of the section becomes almost unbearable.

Anticipating the criticism of business men that it would not pay to spend money for the improvement of public property surrounding such premises as these, it is granted at once that compensation would not come—immediately. Owners of poor property do not feel justified in paying for improvements that increase their investments and do not materially raise their revenue. And, mathematically, they can demonstrate to the final dollar the fatuity of such business policy. But business rarely figures far ahead. It almost never calculates beyond its own generation. For such a period it is undoubtedly unwise from a business standpoint to jeopardize interest-bearing holdings by enhancing their cost without prospect of augmenting their yield. Nevertheless, in the long run,

And it is the long run, and the long run alone, that policy is indubitable unwise, that society must take into account in dealing with problems of this kind. A little spirit of "philanthropy and 5 per cent" will work wonders in a community

eventually, even though sage business men doubt its wisdom and are prone to charge its application exclusively to the charity account. Then, too, the element of civic pride enters to compensate in the everlasting reward of inward satisfaction for whatever attending curtailment of revenue the proper, patriotic, philanthropic course might produce.

## PROPER HOUSING OF FOREIGN ELEMENT GIVES FORT WORTH IMPORTANT TASK

(From Issue of Dec. 14.)

Like all cities of Texas that have devoted little or no attention to the housing of their unskilled working people, Fort Worth finds itself, upon investigation, confronted by all the attending problems of improper methods and means of living. Especially in those districts given over largely to the residence of foreign laborers are conditions of living in most of their phases found to be undesirable and injurious to the permanency of proper social standards. Fort Worth has a large percentage of this type of labor, and sooner or later it will be called upon to deal vigorously with a situation that augments in stubbornness, with its continuation.

The so-called Bohunk population of Fort Worth hardly finds a ready welcome. It comprises, chiefly, Bulgarians, Russians and Poles of the very humblest social standing, who underbid Americans in the matter of wages for the employment they seek. They can live on less than the American laborers because they want less and are so constituted mentally and morally that they will readily endure the more of life's discomforts. In consequence the conditions of living that surround them reveal the acme of social degradation.

Overcrowding is found at its worst in Fort Worth among the sordid homes of these helpless foreigners. It occurs in the individual houses occupied by separate families who are forced to sublet portions of their homes or to bring boarders and lodgers in to make the monthly revenue meet the expense of actual necessities of life. It is also found in the boarding and rooming houses devoted largely to the accommodation of men. The capacity of living rooms is taxed to the uttermost in the effort to supply sleeping places to the great demand. Where this process of overcrowding goes on, expense of living is proportionately reduced to the person or persons involved, and the incidental saving, it is learned upon dependable information, is more the cause of such conditions than is the lack of quarters wherein less crowded conditions might be enjoyed. These foreigners apparently make rabbit warrens of their homes as much from choice as from necessity. Untutored in hygiene, they do not perceive the unsanitary effect of such modes of living, and when only inconvenience or the absence of privacy is the attending cost, it is readily accepted without murmur on the ground that it is outweighed by the consequent saving in revenue. The result has been that houses stand vacant, which, if occupied, would relieve this condition of congestion, merely because the people who should occupy them largely prefer to crowd themselves into smaller quarters when the attending sacrifice of respectable habits of living is compensated in the saving of a dollar or so a week or a month. This characteristic necessarily complicates the situation, for where apathy on the part of the public meets indifference on the part of the tenant, there is likely to be no immediate movement for betterment of conditions that are at once the bane of both.

This situation emphasizes the virtue of the principle that the public should deal with conditions injurious to accepted moral and social standards, whether those immediately affected desire assistance or not. Viewed from the high moral standpoint, it does not matter whether the Bohunks want better conditions or whether they would resent apparent interference with their present modes of living. Perhaps the slight saving in money is of vital importance, and it becomes to them the better part of wisdom to submit to overcrowding than to spend their all for more spacious quarters. The fact, nevertheless, remains that it is to society's detriment if conditions are permitted to continue as they now appear, and to its advantage if they are relieved. These foreigners did not come, perhaps,

through invitation. But the manner of their coming is not the vital consideration. The fact that they are here is of chief importance, and means to lift them as near to the common standards of social life as available methods and their responsiveness will permit should be the first thought in contemplating their condition. As long as they are allowed to live as they do they continue to be a drag upon the entire citizenship. And if they are to be eventually assimilated, they should at least be compelled to adopt proper standards of living to prevent or modify whatever evil effect may follow their continuous contact with the social body. The wage competition of these people with labor that wish to maintain better standards of living must be disastrous.

One story of recent occurrence will suffice to emphasize the situation on the North Side. The Bohunks live like the Chinese, in thickly congested areas, and perhaps bear to the American's eye the same general physical resemblances one to another that are more or less characteristic of Chinese settlements in America. The other day one of the colony was arrested for some offense. He made bond and presented himself for trial at the appointed time. He was tried and convicted, and before sentence was passed, or he had been placed in the custody of the officers, he deliberately arose, walked through the crowd, left the courtroom, and hasn't been heard of since, though the entire community has been thoroughly searched time and again. Those who presume to knowledge of the ways of these people assert positively that the elusive offender is doubtless pursuing his customary course amid old associates, safe in the concealment of the crowd and the lack of distinct identity which they bear.

In nowise is the situation yet beyond control. In fact, it is of virtually recent origin, and by vigorous methods on the part of the city it can be relieved and prevented from recurrence. A few more years, however, and it will have, perhaps, passed from control and be subject to remedy only at enormous expense and painstaking care. By far the easier solution involves immediate action rather than radical measures later, when the situation shall have hardened and become less yielding to improvement.

---

## TEXAS CITIES HAVE COMMON TROUBLES DOMINATING THEIR HOUSING PROBLEMS

(From Issue of Dec. 15.)

Before presenting a digest of methods that have successfully relieved and precluded undesirable housing conditions in cities of America which have been thoroughly aroused to the need of considering the future in its relation to their material and social development, it may not be amiss to summarize and to emphasize the salient points that have largely dominated this discussion of housing conditions in Texas. Throughout this series of articles it has been the unpretentious effort of the writer to show, first, that a serious housing problem prevails in each of the leading cities of the State; that inasmuch as its presence is usually restricted to comparatively small areas it nowhere presents insuperable obstacles to successful solution, yet, at the same time, by the continuous enhancement of artificial values it is acquiring a strong, tenacious hold upon communities which they may eventually find themselves unable to dislodge; and, finally, that American and European experience and judgment unite in commending the principle of prevention as a medium superior to cure in the intelligent direction and control of social development.

The housing problem in each of the principal cities of the State has unique phases. In San Antonio the conspicuous question concerns the Mexican laborers. In Fort Worth it is the foreign population that distinguishes the city's problem from the problems of its sister cities. In Dallas the main problem presents itself in the housing of factory workers and of negroes. And thus it goes, around the circle of the State, each city having a peculiar condition to treat by means it may devise and consider best, but each, nevertheless, having certain conditions in common that are basic in the general housing problem which all the leading municipalities are facing.

### OVERCROWDING AND CONGESTION.

Widely prevalent in Texas, in fact existing to a greater or a lesser degree in all cities inspected by the writer, are the evils of overcrowding of houses and congestion of premises. Legislative restriction has not been placed upon the construction of houses for rental purposes, and it is no infringement of statutory law to build three structures for the occupancy of tenants upon a plat of ground that provides an area scarcely large enough for the purposes of one. There is either a fascinating lure about speculation in the poorer character of rental property, or so vast a risk of investment that it becomes the part of self-protection to wring the last copper of revenue from the outlay by minimizing the cost and augmenting to unreasonable proportions the unit of compensation, together with a corresponding advance in the rate of interest that is exacted. The result of this has been to fill certain sections of Texas cities with lateral tenement houses, differing from the tenements of New York, as it has been previously remarked, only in size and undue expansion horizontally instead of vertically. Then, to meet the high rental values placed upon the property at his use, the tenant has formed the practice of augmenting his revenue by boarding and lodging outsiders. The smallness of the house, in the first instance, and the usual largeness of the tenant's family, together with this enforced acceptance within the home of outsiders and strangers, bring about the crowded condition of living apartments that are revealed in the enormity of their offense against health, propriety and decency only by an actual and painstaking census from house to house. These conditions are common to virtually all the conspicuous cities of Texas and as surely as they are permitted to continue ungoverned by exacting regulations just as surely will they augment in the intensity of their attending degradation.

Necessarily associated with the foregoing conditions are the housing evils of poor ventilation and insufficient light. Privacy among the homes of the unskilled working people is an enjoyment for the most part unknown. Their home life is subjected to the constant scrutiny of their neighbors and sooner or later, social workers declare, begins to show the injurious effects upon its standards of this erosive influence. And there are no apparent indications of substantial abatement of conditions of this kind. Housing enterprises for the use of the humbler laborers are being projected throughout the State with no noticeable deviation from principles that have dominated them in the past. Houses are being crowded upon lots too closely for proper sanitation. Insufficient attention is devoted to their construction for the purpose of insuring adequate light and ventilation. No thought, apparently, is given to a postulate fundamental in scientific consideration of proper racial development—careful attention to the growing child who evolves from the innocent weakling of today into the citizen of tomorrow, still weak and ignorant, or sound and vigorous, as his training and opportunity may have caused. And seldom, if ever, are the finer sensibilities of the human being considered as worthy elements in the social fabric, for there are few apparent efforts made to aid their wholesome development or to preserve them in their pristine virtue.

### CITIES, THEMSELVES, ARE NEGLIGENT.

Moreover, it has been found that a common criticism of the cities of Texas is their negligence of duties upon the fulfillment of which good housing depends for its very life. In the absence of State housing laws or municipal ordinances to restrict construction and to limit occupancy, the only safeguard against evil conditions within the homes of the poorer working people and their surroundings is the city's faithful and indiscriminate enforcement of its sanitary code. Where city ordinance prohibits surface outhouses within a given distance of sewer mains, and where closets of the kind are permitted in territory supplied with sewers, the city, itself, is responsible for whatever evil conditions of housing arise from such disobedience to its mandates. And yet it is a very, very frequent complaint in Texas that municipal authorities do not enforce the provisions of such ordinances. Again, the cities, themselves, are frequently responsible for a multiplicity of surface closets because of the inadequacy of their sewer systems. Unless the sewers fully cover the territory of the town, there must be some surface outhouses and there must be some areas exposed to the contamination of their effluent contagions. Experience has taught that one of the most important con-

siderations of a system of good housing is a system of good sewerage. Good housing rarely prevails over wide territories, however well provided with other means of attainment, without this necessary complement of its equipment. The extension of sewers to all parts of the incorporated area becomes, therefore, one of the first considerations of a municipality that has determined to better its standards of housing.

In the compliance with health codes, the cities themselves are frequently lax. Proper attention is not always bestowed upon the disposal of garbage. There must be some adequate means of removing and destroying the refuse of the house in order to preserve proper standards of sanitation. When this is not done under the supervision of the city, the carelessness and negligence of the tenant, together with the city's indisposition to awaken him to his duty, not infrequently make of advisory laws nothing more than a mockery. Inspection of premises is not sufficiently rigorous. Discretionary powers invested in officials are sometimes retardants upon the enforcement of the law. Then, too, the juries—the people—are frequently prone to deem a law that compels one to clean up his premises as a sort of infringement upon the inalienable rights of American citizenship. Inattention to drainage, absence of provisions for the fumigation or vacant houses, and many similar things that should be done immediately and that are vital to good housing, yet which are neglected, conspire to complicate the problem wherever it prevails in Texas. And all this reveals the real source of the trouble—the indifference of the public.

In its general form, as it appears in Texas and as it doubtless appears elsewhere, the housing problem is in respect of many things threefold. Primarily it concerns the past, the present and the future. Lawrence Veiller writes that housing reform should be directed first "toward preventing the erection of buildings that are unsuitable for people to live in." Then, the proper maintenance of existing houses must be enforced, and, finally, the errors of the past must be corrected. Moreover, it must be considered and solved from three angles—the sanitary, the structural, the social. It also must be considered and solved from the point of view of the tenant, the landlord and the public, and the welfare of any of these must not be ignored. And finally it must be considered and solved from the viewpoint of existing conditions, the laws, and their administration. It will be the effort of final chapters of this discussion to present an explanation of established means of attaining the desired solution.

---

## HOUSING CAMPAIGN SHOULD START WITH THOROUGH SURVEY OF CITY

(From Issue of Dec. 16.)

After protracted study of systems of treatment that have been evolved in the United States for the improvement of undesirable conditions of housing, coupled with a consistent effort to harmonize, in so far as he could, the essential differences of application growing out of distinct variations in climate, race and local conditions, the writer is persuaded to follow closely the constructive work of Mr. Lawrence Veiller of New York in the preparation of a suggestive program of housing reform adaptable to cities of Texas. Mr. Veiller is recognized as one of the foremost social workers of America, and he has made a life-long study of the housing problem in its multifarious phases. His first intimate knowledge of how the other half lives was acquired as a settlement worker in New York City, and it has augmented and developed through years of consistent service in broader fields. He served as secretary and virtually directed the work of the tenement house committee of the New York Charity Organization Society when it was organized in 1898. As secretary of the New York State Tenement House Commission in 1900 he assisted in the drafting of the present tenement house law for cities of the first class, which created the tenement house department of the City of New York. For two years thereafter he served as first deputy tenement Commissioner and helped to give the law its first enforcement. At present Mr. Veiller is secretary and director of the National Housing Association and is virtually the head of the housing movement in the United States.

Mr. Veiller takes the position that the failure "to remedy bad housing conditions in many communities has been due not so much to lack of understanding of the conditions themselves, as to lack of knowledge of the best method of remedying them." It is the writer's belief that cities of Texas are not among this class. Every indication suggestive of cause that has come under his observation during several months of investigation leads to the conclusion that the presence of housing troubles in Texas cities is due to the ignorance of the people concerning prevalent conditions. At the outset, it was ascertained that a very few citizens of Dallas, other than social workers, knew of what consisted the city's housing problem. The same ignorance was revealed in San Antonio, in Houston and elsewhere. As a general thing the public has been unconscious of the life of the other half and it has exhibited certain amazement when it has observed for itself just what conditions actually surrounded it.

### FACTS SHOULD COME FIRST.

Consequently, it should appear to every community that desires improvement of housing conditions that the first thing to do is the ascertainment of facts. Lay bare the city, analyze its social conditions coldly and honestly and then from general principles that are applicable everywhere and special regulations to meet peculiar local conditions, formulate a program of reform that will tend to obliterate the evil and install the good. To attain this end a careful, painstaking survey of the city is necessary; and it should be performed by a committee of citizens possessing public confidence and representative of the highest intelligence, skill and integrity of their several professions or trades. Upon appointment and the commencement of its work, the functions of this committee become dual. It will launch the campaign of reform and must remain with it throughout its progress. Therefore it devolves upon it not only to ascertain the essential facts of the situation and to formulate remedies for reprehensible conditions, but also to assume the task of educating the community with respect to its discoveries and to the methods available for the improvement of conditions of social degradation. Mr. Veiller says of such a committee that it must of necessity be "a body sufficiently wise to prosecute its inquiry and urge its reform in a practical and a sane way, and also one that will command public confidence."

Continuing with reference to the formation of a committee to survey the city, Mr. Veiller writes that inasmuch as the questions with which it will have to deal will be those of building construction, architectural planning, fire protection, sanitation and modern social problems, the committee should preferably be composed of leading representatives of the professions actively dealing with such problems. Therefore—and the wisdom of the suggestion immediately asserts itself—it should have among its members if possible a practical architect, a high-class builder, a sanitary engineer or experienced plumber, a responsible member of the fire department, the superintendent of public buildings or an officer discharging similar duties, a physician, a lawyer, a real estate man, a social worker and such other citizens of representative type who would be interested in the movement both from a humanitarian consideration and a motive of laudable self-interest.

It is immediately obvious that the selection of this committee should be a matter of care and thought. Its membership must be harmonious and it must have a capable executive as its chairman—some one who understands the function of directing, who is fitted for the quick adjustment of petty differences that sometimes intrude themselves into a deliberative body to the defeat of its ends, and who has large powers of discretion, tact, initiation and aggressiveness. "No variety of professional experience," says Mr. Veiller, discussing the necessity for an efficient and homogeneous committee," should outweigh this essential element. \* \* \* Every movement for housing reform is a battle. Most of them are protracted wars extending over many years. The leader of the campaign must have many of the qualities of a good general. Strategy must not be unknown to him. Vitally important is to get the point of view of the various interests involved in bad housing conditions. There must be breadth of view, fair-mindedness and tolerance of the rights of others, of the owners as well as of the tenants, if a successful outcome is to be had from such a movement. \* \* \* There can be no successful legislation based upon impressions. Reforms not based upon fully

ascertained facts will be found to have no permanent value. You will but enact a law one year to have it repealed the next. The breastworks which defend the law are made of the materials dug out in the investigation."

### KEEP PUBLIC INTERESTED IN WORK.

The proper housing investigation must concern itself with causes and tendencies, inasmuch as it seeks to work to practical ends. Moreover, it should have definitely in mind the formulation of measures intended to better conditions. There can be no reform if the campaign be allowed to stop with the ascertainment and publication of a mass of discouraging, heart-rending facts. Once aroused by information the public is ready to lend its assistance to the correction of evils, but the public has a deep-seated forgetfulness that makes the sensation of today seem trivial when remembered tomorrow. Therefore, with its official report in hand the committee should have the basis of a scheme of improvement ready to be suggested for the public's consideration, and when that shall have been projected there must be continued effort on its part to keep the interest of the people alive to the crying need of reform. While it is undoubtedly true that bad housing conditions have arisen in Texas largely because the public has not been aware of what was going on around it, it is equally certain that the disposition of the public to forget and to lose interest after it has once been enlightened, by heroic efforts if by no other means, must be prevented from defeating the end in view. When the crusade is once undertaken it means a hard, dogged fight until concrete results shall justify a cessation of especial effort.

Mr. Veiller's long experience convinces him that no part of a housing investigation is of more importance than the formulation of the schedules to be used in the inquiry. A month or more, he says, may well be taken in the preparation of these schedules, especially where the investigators have had little previous knowledge of the task they have assumed. The schedules should be in the form of cards so that they may be easily filed, and the size suggested is a length of eight inches and a width of five. The points expected to be covered should be printed upon the card so the investigator may be required only to check the facts against their proper classifications. And a system should be devised to eliminate the confusion attending differences in judgment of different persons respecting the conditions upon which they are required to report. The schedule should be made complete, not only as to general principles of housing, but also as to local peculiarities which must be in a measure understood and considered in advance of the investigation by social workers who have previously gone over the ground.

The facts ascertained and analyzed, the report made and given wide publicity, the next duty of the committee is to keep up its campaign of education with persistence. It will doubtless require long hammering to bring an evidence of yielding, but when it does come the results obtained will in all probability be of sufficient merit and magnitude to compensate for the long siege of discouraging effort.

## PRINCIPLES OF A HOUSING LAW SUGGESTED FOR TEXAS CITIES

(From Issue of Dec. 17.)

The preparation of a housing code is a work that calls for care and deliberation. The law becomes its own guaranty of life or its own condemnation by virtue of the success it meets in pursuing its purpose. It therefore must not only be drawn to stand the test of the courts, but it must fulfill its practical functions to the satisfaction of public opinion. Assailed by vigorous opponents from the time of its pendency in the Council or Legislature—a certain fate it must meet and overcome—the influence of its own works must be the chief reliance of its proponents and defenders in the breaking down of stubborn and powerful opposition that may mean eventually its nullification or repeal.

At the outset it should be understood that the enactment of a housing law will have as an early effect the apparent curtailment of revenue from rental properties. Of course, there are innumerable advantages growing out of the rigid enforcement of such a statute that may be said fully to compensate indirectly at



least the attending loss in rentals and expenditures for improvements, but these advantages accrue to the community more rapidly than to the landlord, who is not easily convinced that in the long run the proper modes of living he assists his tenants to follow will return to him directly as well as to the community the substantial income he believes his investment entitles him to. When the law prohibits a house to occupy more than a stated percentage of the lot, the traffic in small, closely-crowded huts and shanties is stopped and revenue is proportionately reduced. When the law forbids the occupancy of a room by more people than it will provide the proper proportion of fresh air for, the business of the cheap tenement will be sadly interfered with in so far as are concerned the large revenues extorted from hapless creatures who are compelled by greed or circumstance to sleep in rooms after the fashion of sardines in a box. These things and their like may be expected to create decided and powerful opposition to any legislative movement that contemplates radical changes.

It is the certainty of stubborn opposition that makes it expedient, therefore, to impose the more rigid restrictions upon the work of the future, rather than to undertake radical changes in conditions that are already prevalent where their consummation is sure to entail considerable loss to property owners. The process of attaining good housing is more the work of evolution than of revolution. It is simpler to build up good housing conditions by preventing the occurrence of obstacles to that end, than it is to eliminate evil conditions that already exist. The work of elimination is a very gradual thing usually, whereas the work of intelligent construction and arrangement of all parts of the growing city may proceed with marked rapidity. It is this phase of the problem that makes endeavor toward the attainment of ideal conditions in the future of paramount importance in designing a housing campaign with its necessary complement of legislation.

### KEEP IT A CITY OF HOMES.

In providing for the future it should be the effort of all cities where tenement houses are of inconsiderable number, to fix upon the existing number as a minimum and by a process of education and legislation gradually reduce that minimum to the vanishing point. Housing experts throughout the world inveigh against the tenement house. "Don't let your city become a city of tenements; keep it a city of homes" is among the first admonitions to cities seeking aid and information in working out a proper housing scheme. This may be accomplished by encouraging the construction of detached houses for the occupancy of working people and by discouraging, through education and restrictive regulations, the erection of tenements.

It is taken for granted that none of the cities of Texas desires to become a tenement city. All have as the basis of their present housing schemes the detached house, although there are many instances of comparatively small structures, themselves, being converted into institutions that meet the accepted definition of a tenement house as it is recognized by law in the United States. Wherever a city may have its choice as between tenements and individual homes it selects the latter, the former presenting in their most aggravated forms the stubborn evils of bad housing. There is, therefore, little use in Texas for a tenement house law. A general housing statute will serve eventually to correct what tenement house troubles now prevail and stop their further development.

That the law to assist the development and continuance of good housing conditions should be of State enactment is a question that conditions must largely determine. Such a measure would accomplish at once throughout the entire State that which it would doubtless require the several cities a long time to do, and yet its effect might not prove as satisfactory as the effect of local ordinances because of greater difficulties in the way of its enforcement. Upon the law's enforcement everything will depend. Housing evils can not be eradicated by the enactment of any measure, be it local or State-wide in scope. They will succumb only to the constant, unrelenting enforcement of the law's provisions. It might be, therefore, that the influence of public sentiment would operate more potently toward the enforcement of a local law than toward the execution of a Statewide measure. However, selection becomes a matter needing the most

careful consideration, and should not be made before the judgment of many expert minds shall have been procured.

The extent to which a housing law may be carried will become in Texas, perhaps, something of a problem. It will in all probability—be it State law or city ordinance—encounter frequent challenges upon constitutional grounds. It will remain for the legal advisers to keep the measure clear of constitutional shoals. Should they succeed, widespread and satisfying results may be accomplished under the operation of the law; should they fail, other means of acquiring a permanency of proper, wholesome development must be found.

If provision can not be made for the consummation of desired ends by private enterprise under public supervision, it may become necessary eventually to charge the State, the municipality, itself, with that responsibility. It may be, perhaps, a far cry from present political conditions to a public-owned and public-controlled scheme of housing, yet the fact remains that the conspicuous ex-



**"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."**

amples of the most successful crusades against old and hardened slums have not only been waged by municipalities themselves, but the pretty, comfortable and healthful residence areas into which the former denizens of the slums were moved, have been designed and maintained under public control. The King's Highway of London was once a slum district. It is now one of the most magnificent boulevards of the world. The people who used to dwell amid the squalor of the old slum territory now reside in neat brick cottages erected by the London County Council from the profits accruing from the acquisition and subsequent improvements of the old slum district. The city of Berlin is a city without a slum area, and yet more than twenty-five years ago the slum was the bane of its municipal life. At that period it had less than 1,000,000 inhabitants; today it has more than 3,000,000, and is rated as the cleanest city in the world. It took over the control of its housing and solved its problem in all the phases of congestion, overcrowding, vice and squalor, solely by municipal effort, and not through the philanthropy, the charity nor the benevolent business of individuals.

#### **HAS A GRASP ON TEXAS.**

The housing problem is getting a hold on Texas cities. Unless measures are taken immediately to solve it satisfactorily, or at least to make the beginning

of solution, it will become more complicated and intricate with the passage of the years. The field of private philanthropic enterprise is open and may be cultivated to fruitful advantage. The spirit of "philanthropy and 5 per cent" becomes a potent social force when properly directed, but it can not, of course, be coerced. Model homes erected by private philanthropy that expects only a reasonable return upon its investment assist materially in the required readjustment. But they may be erected only when the spirit prompts the philanthropist. Adequate laws governing the construction of future houses, if properly enforced, may become the final solvent of the trouble, and should be liberally drawn upon wherever there is a sincere desire to bring about improved conditions of living. Their potentiality may be substantially augmented by the co-operation of private philanthropy. And at present these two means seem all that are immediately available. That fact urges more forcibly upon the student of such conditions that in the event of their failure the last resort must be the community itself. There is but one thing inevitable: Conditions can not continue to be as they are without serious detriment to the social body. They must be remedied. Who knows that it will not come about in this country, as it has come in Europe's most enlightened nations, that the privileges, prerogatives and powers of the municipality itself may have to be enlarged and broadened to permit of community ownership of and community dealing in the housing business? If it comes it will be as the dernier resort—after all other means shall have failed. And, again, if it come, it will doubtless solve the problem.

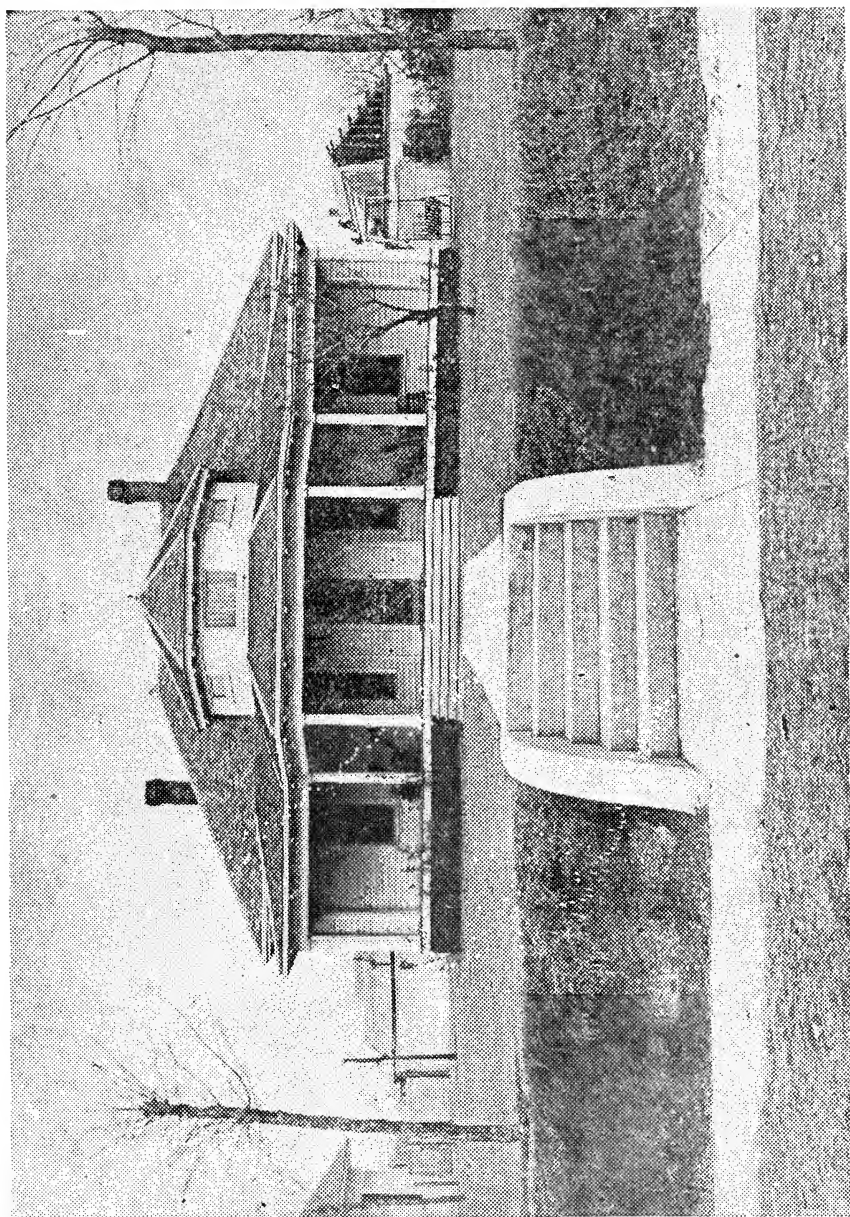
Reverting to the subject of a housing law, the principal thing to accomplish, it has been previously shown, is to direct aright the channel of development by preventing further degradation and expansion of evil conditions of housing. The law must insist that all buildings constructed in the future shall comply with its provisions. In the first place, if possible, it should limit the area of the building lot which the house may occupy—the surest means of preventing congestion of premises and of creating adequate facilities for light and ventilation. The height of the house should be regulated, and imperative provisions made for yards and courts. Rear tenements, if possible, should be forbidden by law, and if it be found that this procedure is inhibited by constitutional restrictions, their construction should be regulated by rigid rules intended to assist the execution against them of the stern provisions of the sanitary code. Dark rooms should be forbidden by insisting upon windows that open upon a street or yard, and in so far as it may be legally practicable, the size of the rooms should not be allowed to fall below a fixed minimum of cubic space. Access to living rooms and bed rooms should be had without passage through another bed room, thereby insuring the privacy that is essential to wholesome home life.

Under the head of sanitation there should be far-reaching restrictions imposed upon the new building. Living rooms in cellars should not be tolerated. Walls and floors below the ground level should be damp-proof and water-proof. There should be in every house a proper sink with running water, where public mains are reasonably accessible, and also where public or private sewers are reasonably accessible every house should have within it a water closet. Provisions should be made to effect careful plumbing. The bathtub is so generally considered more of a convenience than a necessity that it would probably be difficult to insist upon the construction of every house in the future with bathroom equipment. If a way could be found, however, to bring this about, a long-felt want among the poor would be satisfied.

Alterations of houses should also be controlled by the law, similar provisions applying to such work as would apply to the construction of new buildings. When alterations are made the work is for the future.

### MAINTENANCE OF HOUSES NOW BUILT.

Dealing with the present, that is, the maintenance of houses already erected, there should be strict regulations of the law to insure wholesome modes of living. Every dwelling house should at all times be supplied with water in sufficient quantity, either within the house or on the lot, and within twelve



"EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ATTRACTIVENESS."

1917, 18  
CALIFORNIA

or fifteen feet of the house. If the city mains are reasonably accessible, the law should insist that each house have its own water tap. The occupant or tenant of every dwelling house should be required by the law to keep the house and premises free of accumulations of dirt, filth, garbage or other refuse matters, and should be compelled to clean the premises whenever ordered by the health authorities to do so. Wall paper should never be placed upon the walls or ceiling until the old paper shall have been removed and the walls or ceiling thoroughly cleaned. The tenant should be required to provide himself with a regulation garbage can, and the city should take charge of the disposal of its contents. If a room in a dwelling is found to be overcrowded, the Health Department should be authorized to order the number of persons sleeping or living therein to be so reduced that there shall not be less than 600 cubic feet of air to each adult and 400 cubic feet of air to each child under 12 years of age. The law should also provide that whenever a dwelling house or any part of it is infected with contagious disease, or is unfit for human habitation, or dangerous to life or health by reason of want of repair, or of defects in drainage, plumbing, ventilation or construction, or by reason of existence on the premises of nuisances likely to cause sickness among the occupants, the Health Department may issue an order requiring the occupants to vacate the house. Authority should also be vested in the Health Board to compel the repair of buildings unfit, by reason of deterioration, for human habitation. With respect to large rooming houses, provisions for fire escapes should be made.

The law should also compel certain improvements in dwellings erected prior to its passage, although it will probably be found that it can not be quite as restrictive in this instance as it may be feasible to be with regard to dwellings of future construction. It should compel the cutting of windows in all dark rooms and faulty ventilation should be remedied. In all houses erected prior to the passage of the law, where connection with the sewer is possible, surface closets should be abandoned and sanitary closets installed. Repairs necessary to make ramshackle houses habitable should be insisted upon. The provisions of the law should be inflexible in respect to these things, so that old conditions may be put in immediate line of improvement.

Plans of proposed buildings should be filed with the appropriate official and should not be permitted to be used until they shall have received his approval. The same procedure should control the alteration of existing buildings. And before occupancy may be legally permitted it should be the duty of the Health Department to inspect the house and issue a certificate setting forth the fact of its compliance with the sanitary and housing codes, in its construction and equipment. Penalties should attach to violation of this provision sufficient to insure its obedience. Owners and agents of all dwelling houses should be required to file with the Health Department a list of their holdings. Penalties for violations of any provision of the code should be made reasonably severe. And the enforcement of the code should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Health Department.

Many of the foregoing ideas are largely the substance of the model law written by Mr. Lawrence Veiller of New York as the framework for such legislation throughout the cities of the United States. This law was the working basis for the housing ordinance passed last year by the city of Columbus (Ohio), which also has been drawn upon for suggestions serviceable in the preparation of a skeleton for a Texas law or an ordinance for Texas cities. The law has stood the tests of the court upon most of its provisions, and it is widely favored as a means toward bringing about those reforms that are believed to be so essential to the proper development of American cities.





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
BERKELEY

**THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW**

Books not returned on time are subject to a fine of 50c per volume after the third day overdue, increasing to \$1.00 per volume after the sixth day. Books not in demand may be renewed if application is made before expiration of loan period.

NOV 8 1920

MAR 14 1921

DEC 3 1921  
SENT ON ILL

MAR 20 2003

U. C. BERKELEY



395066

HD 7303  
T4B8

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

